Shintaro Kago

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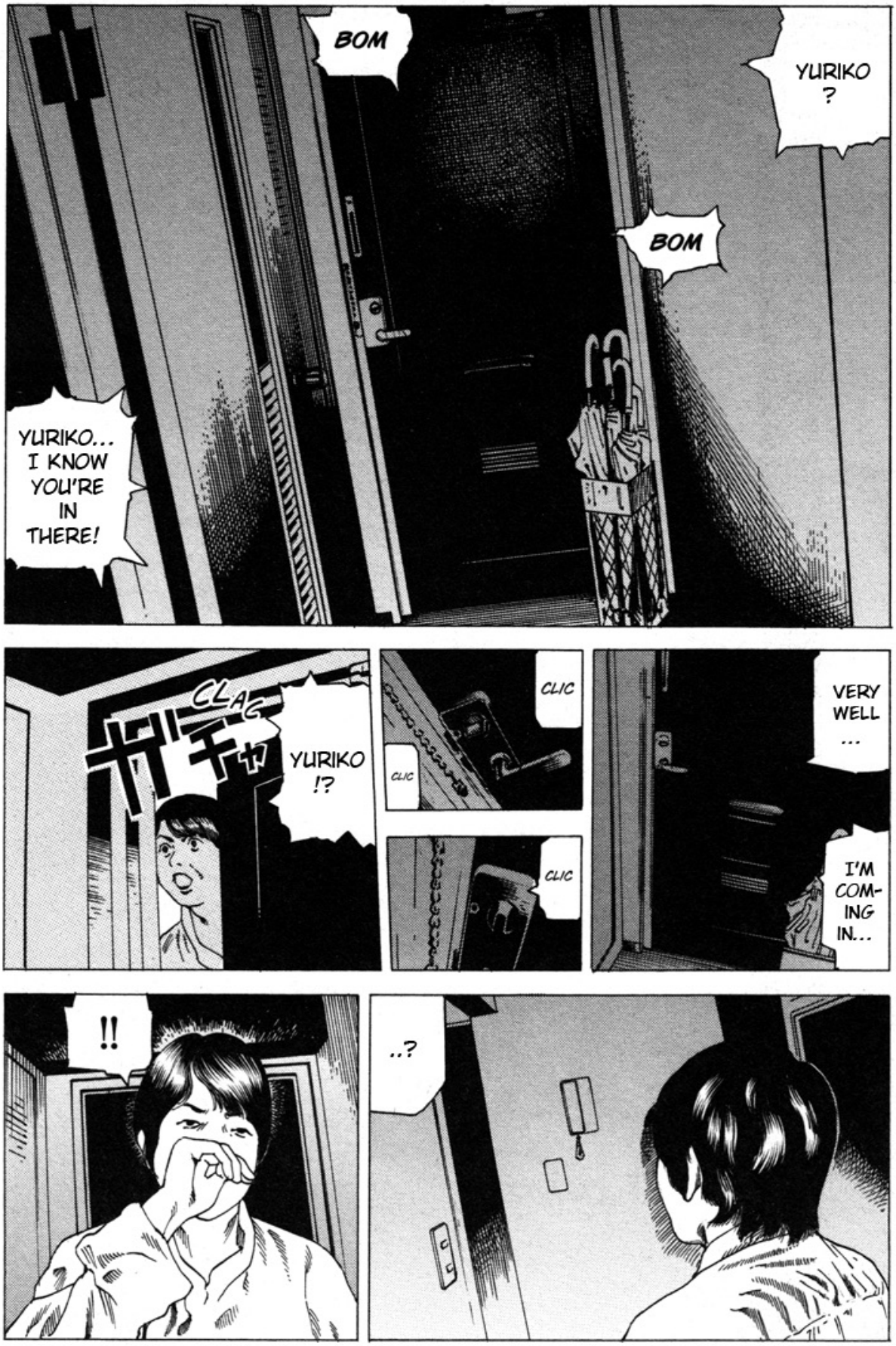
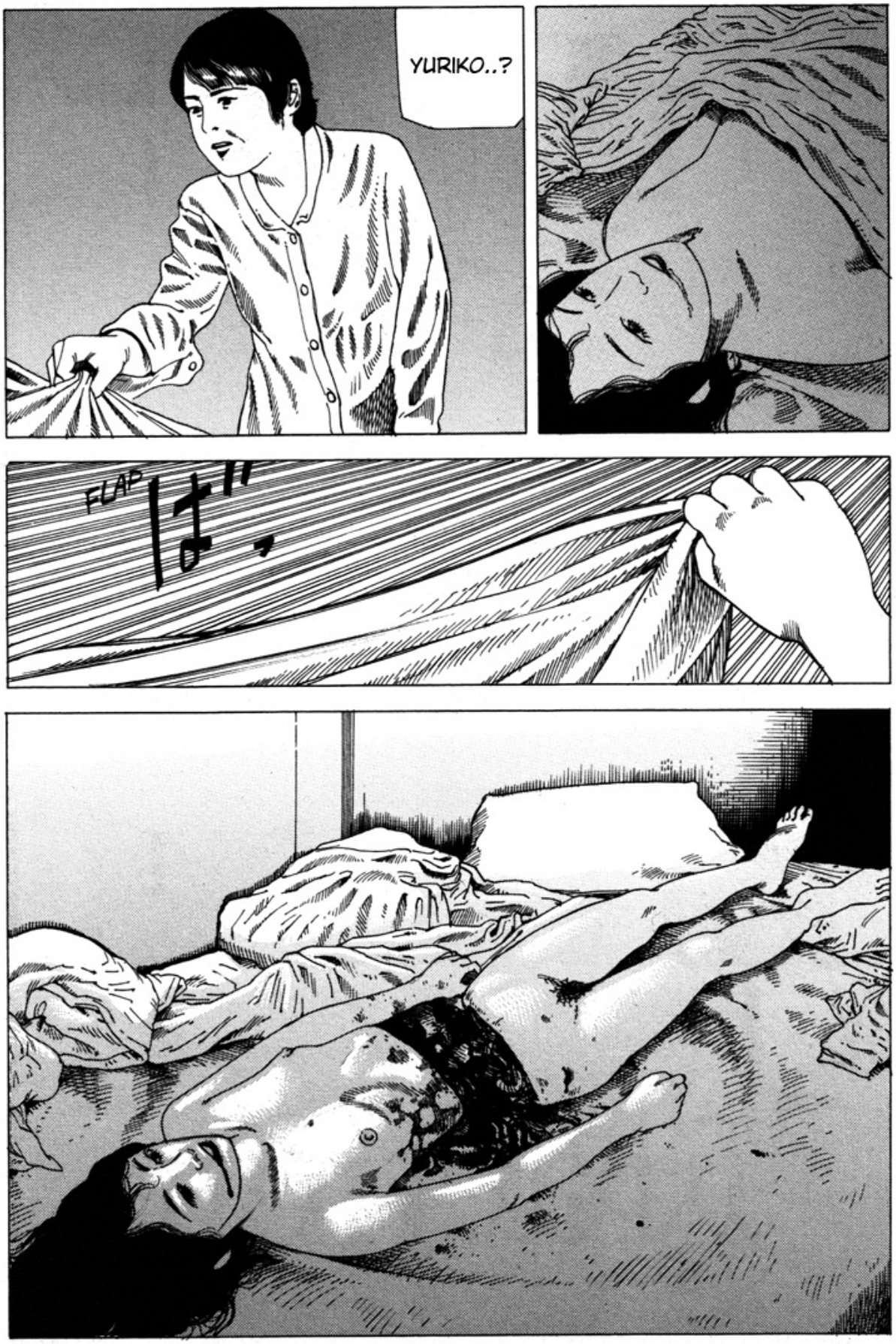
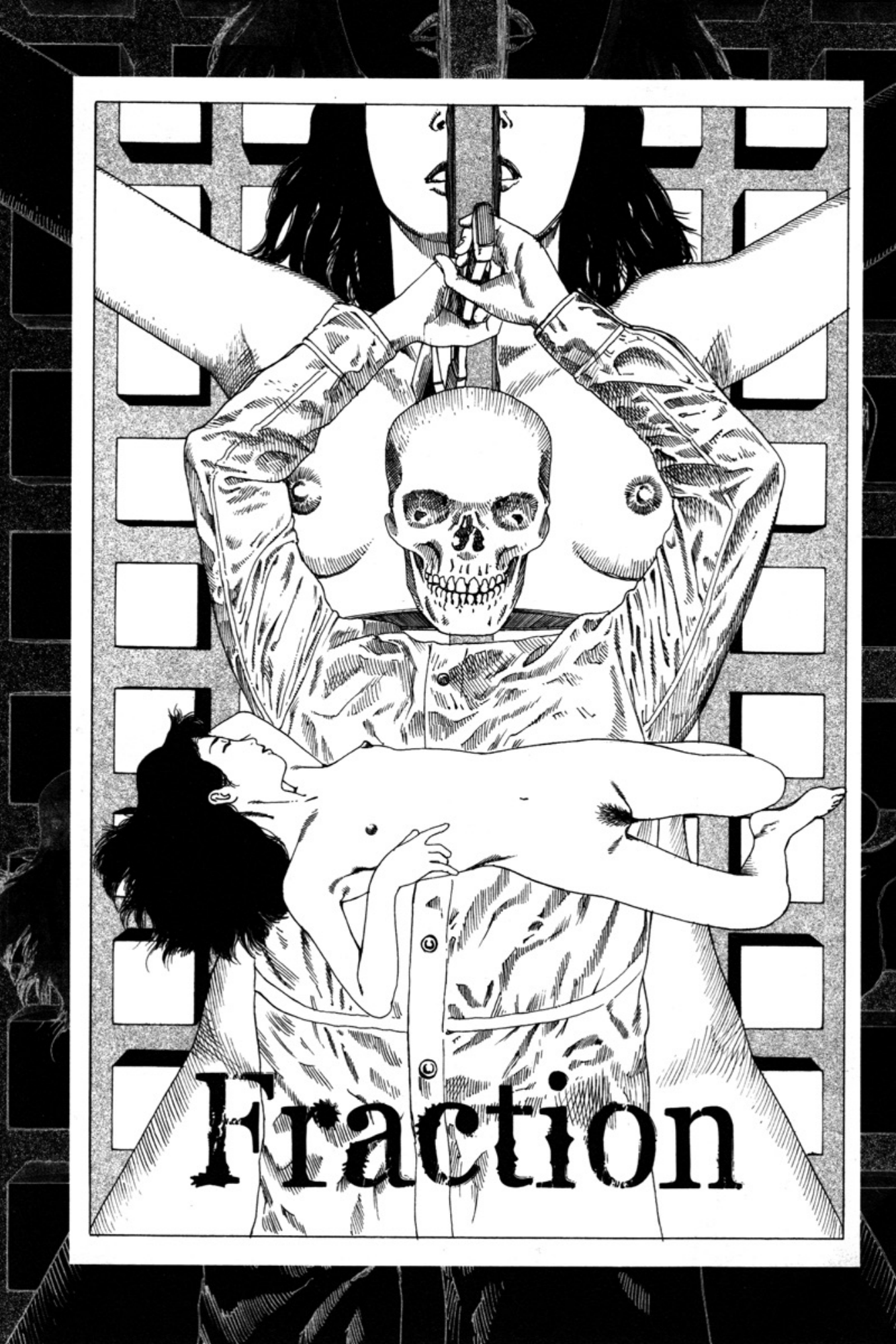
VORACIOUS ITCHES

THIS BOOK IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PERSONS (PHYSICALLY OR MORALLY) WOULD BE PURELY COINCIDENTAL.


BOM
YURIKO ?
BOM
YURIKO... I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE!
CLAC
ポチャ
YURIKO !?
CLIC
CLIC
CLIC
VERY WELL ...
I'M COM-ING IN...
!!
..?


YURIKO..?
FLAP
はっ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CHARACTERS

RYOKO FUJIOKA
WAITRESS

KOTARO HIGASHINO
WAITER

MACHIKO SODA
WAITRESS

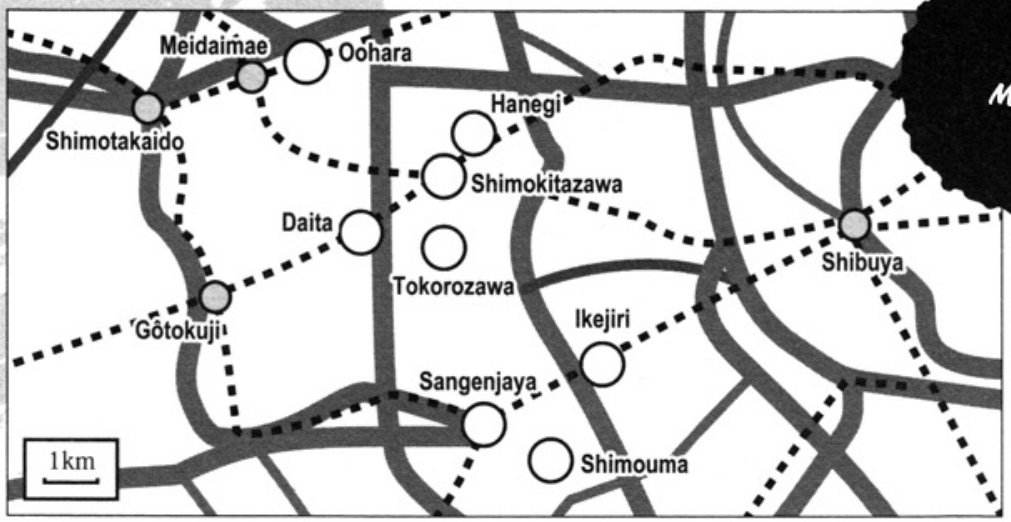
MAKOTO OOYAMA
WAITRESS

RYO HAYAMI
WAITER

TAKEKO YUKI
EDITOR

SHINTARO KAGO
MANGA ARTIST

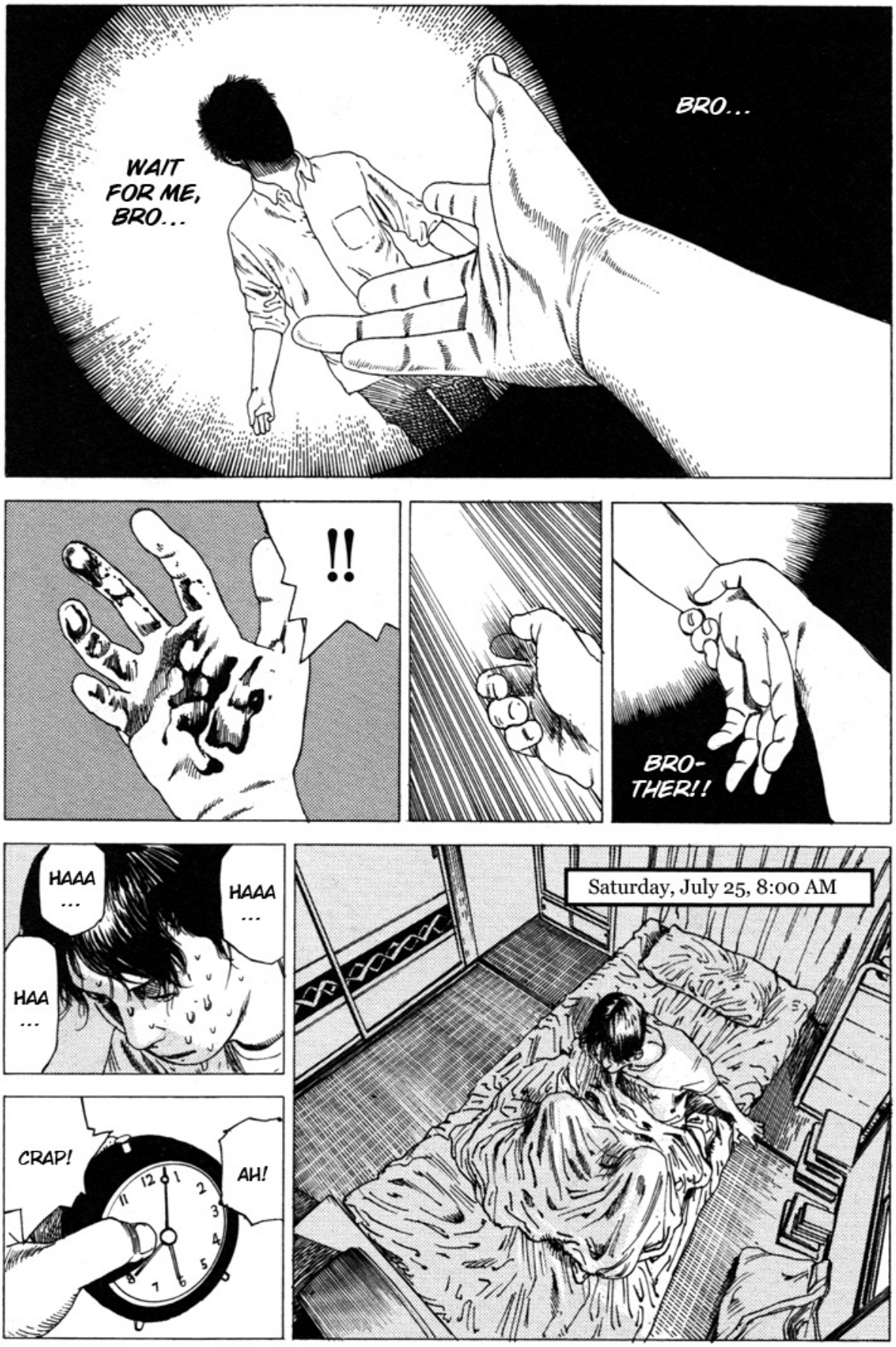
MAP



CHAT NOIR

THE SLICING DEVIL

1


WAIT FOR ME, BRO...
BRO...
!!
BRO-THER!!
HAAA ...
HAAA ...
HAA ...
CRAP!
AH!
Saturday, July 25, 8:00 AM

Saturday, July 25, 10:00 AM
"Chat Noir" Tea Lounge
COFFEE CHAT NOIR
HAVE YOU MADE YOUR CHOICE?
GOOD MOR-NING!

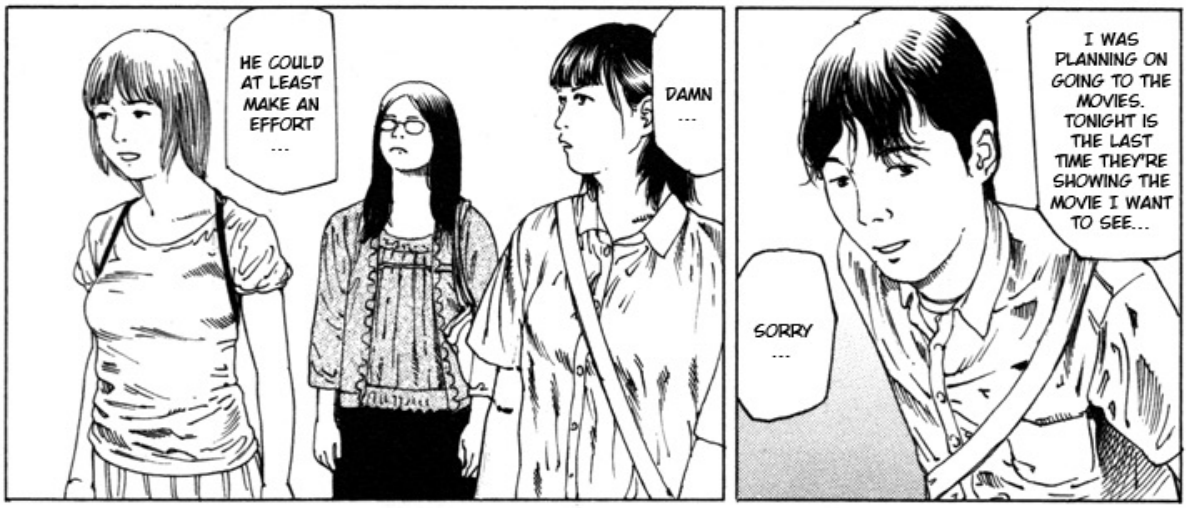
AH, NO, WAIT!
THERE. I'LL HAVE ICED CHOCO-LATE MILK INSTEAD.
I'LL HAVE A CREAM TEA... UH... NO, WAIT...
HMM... I'M NOT SURE ...
HOW 'BOUT YOU, WHAT WILL YOU HAVE?
AH, GEEZ, I DON'T KNOW YET...
I'LL CHOOSE THIS INSTEAD.
OH, THEY HAVE VIETNAM-ESE COFFEE!
MAYBE SOME FRUIT JUICE ...
HEY, WAIT A SEC! I'VE STILL NOT OR-DERED ANY-THING ...
A CUP OF ICED COFFEE, PLEASE.
I'LL JUST HAVE ICED COFFEE.
AAAH... I REALLY CAN'T DECIDE! SORRY...
NO PROB-LEM!
THE CHICKEN SANDWICH LOOKS TASTY... THE DOUGH-NUTS TOO ...
AH, AL-THOUGH ...
HMM... NO THANKS.
SHOULD WE ORDER SOME FOOD? THEY SELL PASTRIES.
HI!
PFFF ...
SURE!
TWO ICED COFFEES FOR TABLE 5, PLEASE!

OH, YOU'RE SO TOLERANT, KOTARO ...
ポン POF
IT TAKES ME TIME TO DECIDE TOO.
OH, IT'S NOTHING, IT'S PART OF THE JOB.
WHAT A PAIN, PEOPLE LIKE THEM... ESPECIALLY DURING RUSH HOUR.
THE SERIAL KILLER, THE "SLICING DEVIL" !!!
OF COURSE NOT, MORON!
WHAT ?!
DID YOU SEE THAT? HE'S STILL RUNNING ABOUT!
THE COCK-ROACH ?
BUT NOW IT'S VERY CLOSE TO HERE! HOW HORRIBLE!
THE LAST TIME, IT WAS IN SHIMO-UMA!!
AROUND THESE PARTS, ON TOP OF THAT.
THAT'S RIGHT, HE NEVER STOPS!
AND THE THIRD IN HIGASHI KITAZAWA... ALL AREAS CLOSE TO HERE!
THE SECOND IN DAITA.
THE FIRST ONE WAS IN SANGEN-JAYA.
YOU'VE REALLY MEMOR-IZED ALL THIS !?
WITH THE LAST ONE IT MAKES FOUR!
THREE ?!
HOW MANY DEAD SO FAR ?

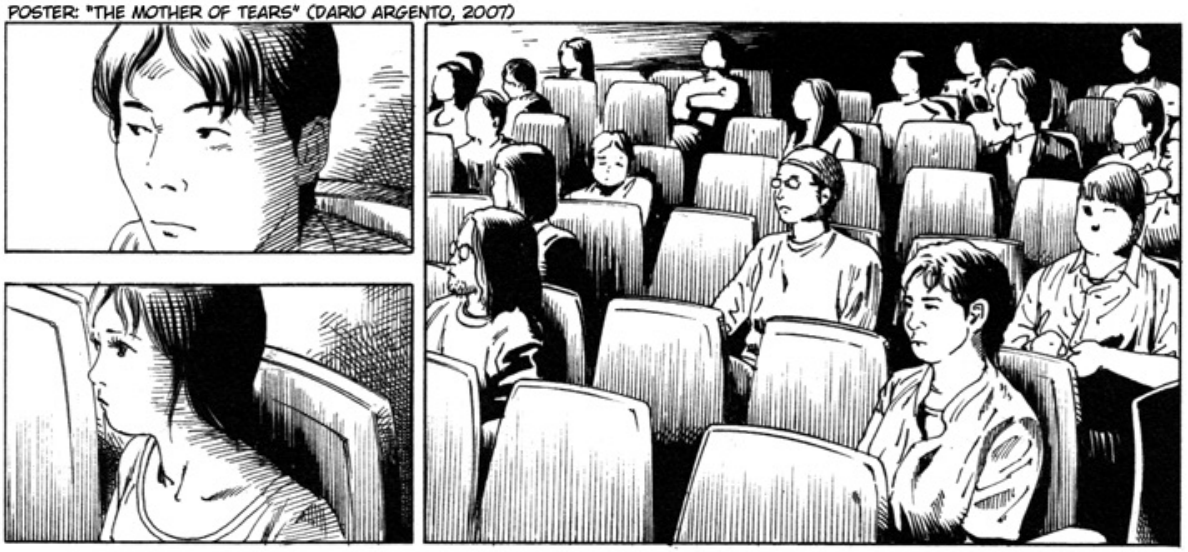
TN: SHIMOUMA, SANGENJAYA, DAITA AND HIGASHI KITAZAWA ARE AREAS OF THE SETAGAYA DISTRICT IN TOKYO.

CAN YOU EVEN PICTURE SOMETHING THAT HORRIFIC? BEING SLICED UP ALIVE BY A SAW?
THEY DON'T TALK ABOUT THIS IN THE PAPERS.
USING WHAT, A SAW ?
AND HE SLICES PEOPLE IN HALF, DOESN'T HE?
WELL... I WOULD BEGIN BY KILLING OR SEDATING MY VICTIMS ...
HOW WOULD YOU DO IT, THEN?
YEAH, THAT'S TRUE!
THEY WOULD STRUGGLE TOO MUCH.
NEVERTHELESS, CUTTING UP SOMEONE ALIVE SEEMS DIFFICULT TO ME.
AND YOU WOULD KEEP THEM IN THE FREEZER TILL THEN ?
I COULD ALSO FREEZE THE CORPSES UNTIL THEY'RE REALLY HARD, SO THE BLOOD WOULDN'T FLOW DURING THE CUTTING.
EURK... IT'S LIKE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT GUTTING A FISH!
YOU WOULD BLEED THEM ?!
...AND TO MAKE SURE BLOOD DOESN'T SPURT EVERYWHERE, I WOULD LET THEM BLEED OUT BEFORE CUTTING THEM UP.
BULLSHIT... YOU CAN'T SLICE A BODY IN HALF WITH A SWORD!
DO YOU MEAN A SAMURAI ?
WHAT'S A SWASHBUCKLER ?
I UNDERSTAND NOW, THE KILLER IS A SWASHBUCKLER!

HUH? HOW'S THAT?
THAT'S IT, RYOKO IS NOW IN DETECTIVE MODE!
BUT YOUR EXPLANATION IS STILL A LITTLE DISAPPOINTING.
ON THE CONTRARY, IT'S COMPLETELY FEASIBLE. AT THE TIME, THAT'S HOW PEOPLE WHO WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH GOT THEIR HEAD SEPARATED FROM THEIR BODIES.
IS THIS TRUE? INCREDIBLE!
OH, IT WASN'T THAT HARD TO FIGURE OUT ...
EACH TIME A STORY LIKE THIS HAPPENS, RYOKO DEEPLY COGITATES ABOUT IT! DO YOU REMEMBER THE FAMILY THAT WAS KILLED LAST YEAR? SHE FOUND OUT WHO WAS THE MURDERER BEFORE HE WAS ARRESTED BY THE POLICE!
AH, THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE NEW HERE, YOU DON'T KNOW HER YET...
WOAH THERE!
SORRY!
DO YOU PLAN ON SCREWING AROUND MUCH LONGER? GET BACK TO WORK!
HEY, YOU!
WILL YOU COME AND EAT WITH US, KOTARO?
COFFEE
CHAT NOIR
ジャノアール
COFFEE CHAT NOIR


HE COULD AT LEAST MAKE AN EFFORT ...
DAMN ...
I WAS PLANNING ON GOING TO THE MOVIES. TONIGHT IS THE LAST TIME THEY'RE SHOWING THE MOVIE I WANT TO SEE...
SORRY ...

POSTER: "THE MOTHER OF TEARS" (DARIO ARGENTO, 2007)

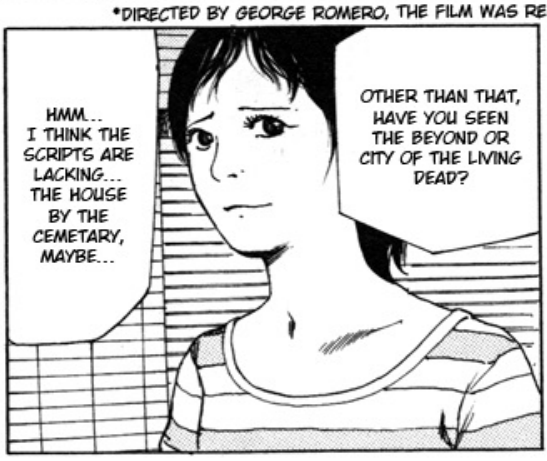


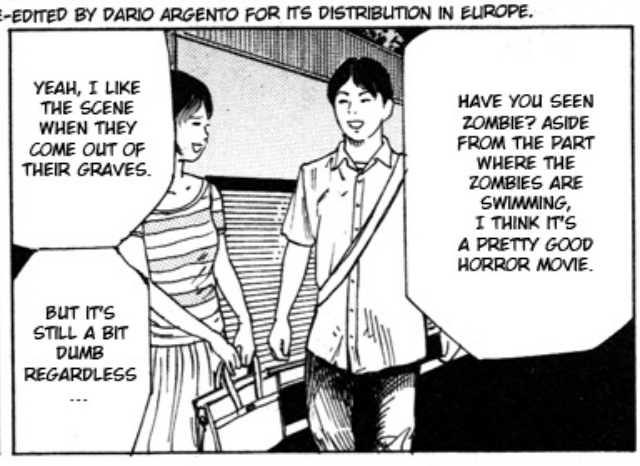
OPEN
CAFE & SHOT BAR
I WAS IN THE AUDIENCE AND I WAS THINKING...
THE MOTHER OF TEARS
ER... DID YOU SEE THIS MOVIE TOO?
EX-CUSE ME?
AREN'T YOU BEING A LITTLE SEXIST?
I LOVE HORROR MOVIES, MIND YOU!
I WAS JUST THINKING TO MYSELF THAT A GIRL WHO GOES TO SEE THE LATEST ARGENTO ALL BY HERSELF, WELL, IT IS KIND OF UN-USUAL...
NO, THAT'S NOT IT...
DO YOU THINK I'M WEIRD?

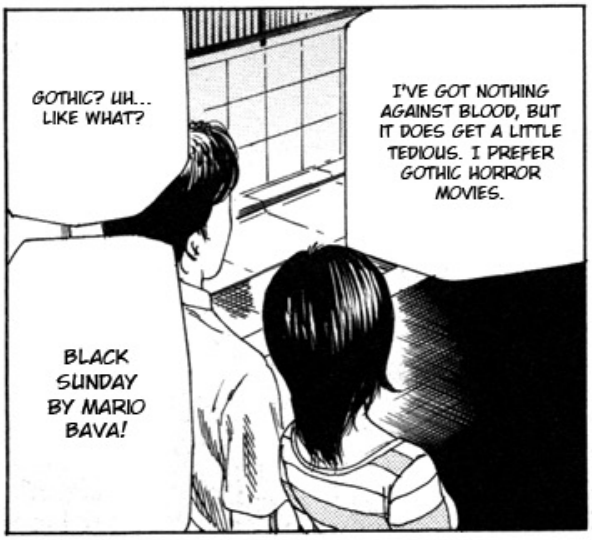
AH... I UNDERSTAND BETTER NOW.
AND SINCE THIS WAS THE LAST SCREENING, I DECIDED TO GO ANYWAY.
ACTUALLY, A FRIEND OF MINE WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO GO WITH ME CANCELLED AT THE LAST MOMENT ...

AND THE PERKY MUSIC NEAR THE END THAT CONTRASTS WITH THE PICTURE... I LOVE IT!
YOU THINK SO? I LIKE IT, I THINK IT'S GOT A NICE SENSE OF RHYTHM.
ARGENTO'S VERSION OF DAWN OF THE DEAD* WASN'T ALL THAT GOOD, REALLY...

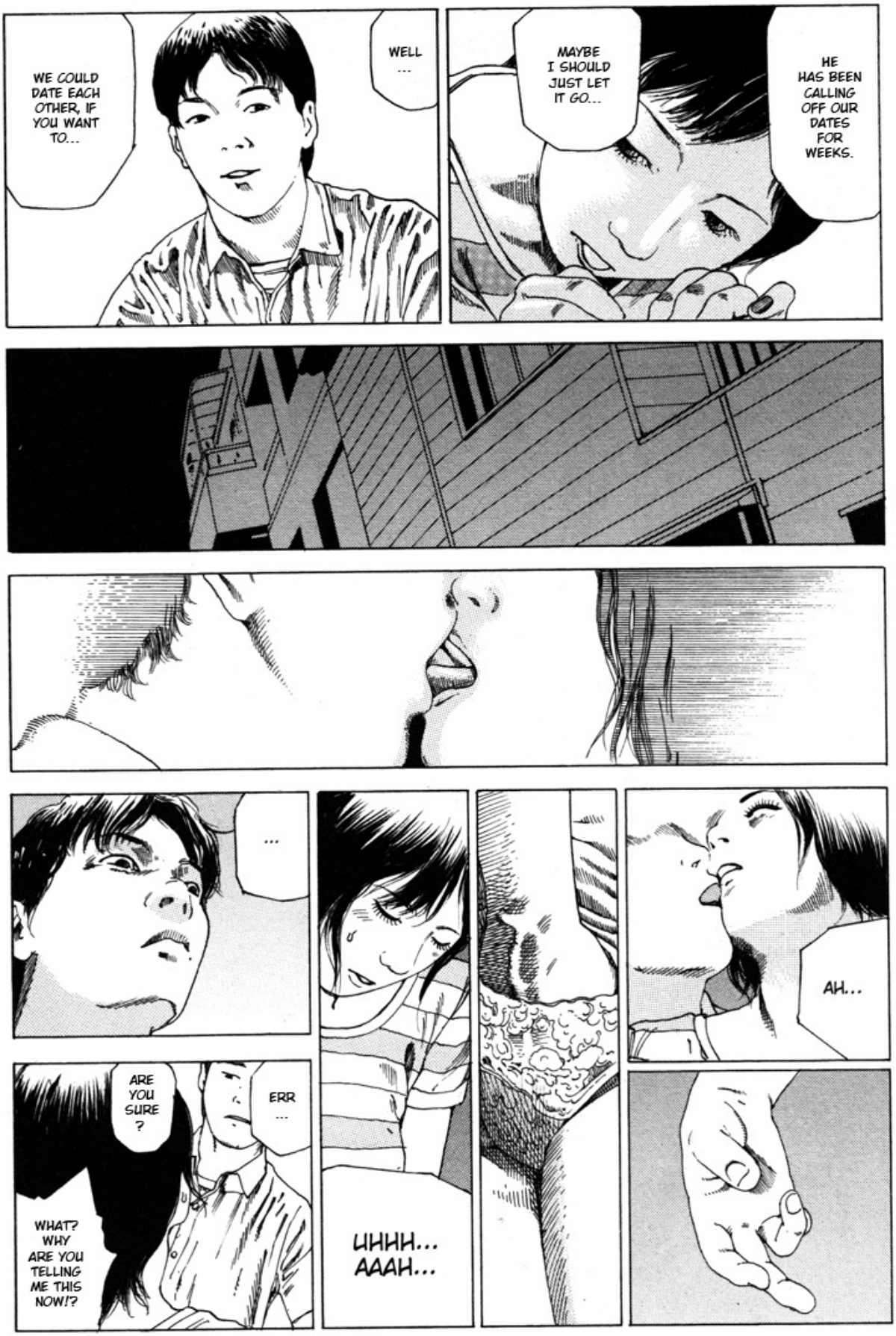
*DIRECTED BY GEORGE ROMERO, THE FILM WAS RE-EDITED BY DARIO ARGENTO FOR ITS DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE.


HMM... I THINK THE SCRIPTS ARE LACKING... THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETARY, MAYBE...
OTHER THAN THAT, HAVE YOU SEEN THE BEYOND OR CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD?


YEAH, I LIKE THE SCENE WHEN THEY COME OUT OF THEIR GRAVES.
BUT IT'S STILL A BIT DUMB REGARDLESS ...
HAVE YOU SEEN ZOMBIE? ASIDE FROM THE PART WHERE THE ZOMBIES ARE SWIMMING, I THINK IT'S A PRETTY GOOD HORROR MOVIE.


GOTHIC? UH... LIKE WHAT?
I'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST BLOOD, BUT IT DOES GET A LITTLE TEDIOUS. I PREFER GOTHIC HORRER MOVIES.
BLACK SUNDAY BY MARIO BAVA!

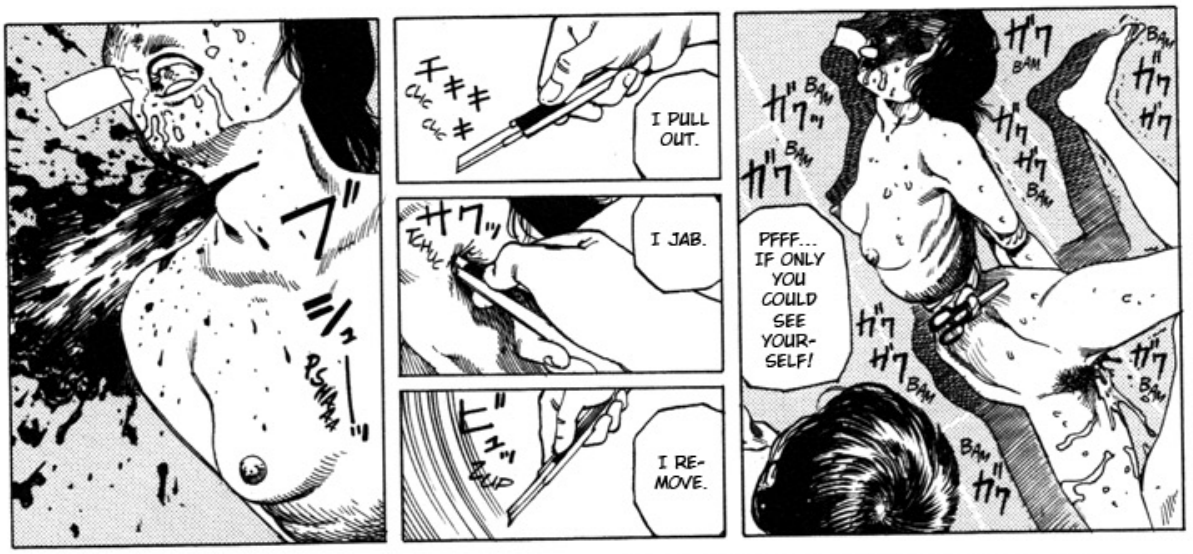
PFFF... YET ANOTHER GORY FILM!
BUT I DID LIKE TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE!
HM, BAVA... I DON'T LIKE HIS GRAND GUIGNOL SIDE VERY MUCH...
THANK YOU FOR WALKING ME BACK HOME.
DO YOU LIVE IN THIS BIG HOUSE? ALL ALONE?
NO, IT'S DIVIDED INTO FOUR APART-MENTS.
DON'T YOU WANT TO STAY AND TALK FOR A LITTLE WHILE?
HEY, I'M SORRY...
BUT I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO FIND MYSELF ALONE, TODAY.
ACTUALLY, IT WAS MY BOYFRIEND.
A SHORT WHILE AGO, WHEN I TOLD YOU THAT MY FRIEND CANCELLED AT THE LAST MOMENT...
LOOK WHAT I'VE FOUND!
TADAAA!
AH, NICE!

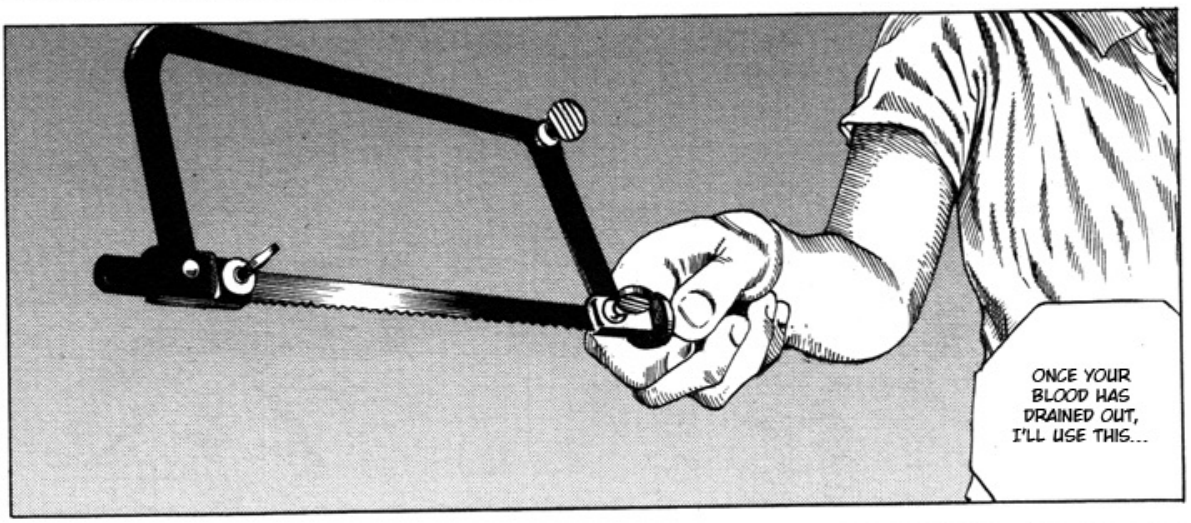

WE COULD DATE EACH OTHER, IF YOU WANT TO...
WELL ...
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST LET IT GO...
HE HAS BEEN CALLING OFF OUR DATES FOR WEEKS.
...
ARE YOU SURE ?
ERR ...
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS NOW!?
UHHH... AAAH...
AH...

I'M LETTING MYSELF GO... THAT'S WHAT MUST BE SCARING BOYS AWAY ...
AH ...
Y-YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
DON'T YOU WANT TO TAKE A SHOWER FIRST?
NO, I MEAN ...
FRAC
HEY!
PFFF...
GOOD. I'M LUCKY, HE'S QUITE HANDSOME.
IT SEEMS LIKE THE LIQUOR'S EFFECTS HAVE DISSIPATED.
LIKE THIS, I'LL BE ABLE TO CLEAN MYSELF IF THERE'S TOO MUCH BLOOD.
WAIT! DIDN'T YOU WANT ME TO TAKE A SHOWER?
NOPE. IT'S GOOD. IT'LL DO.

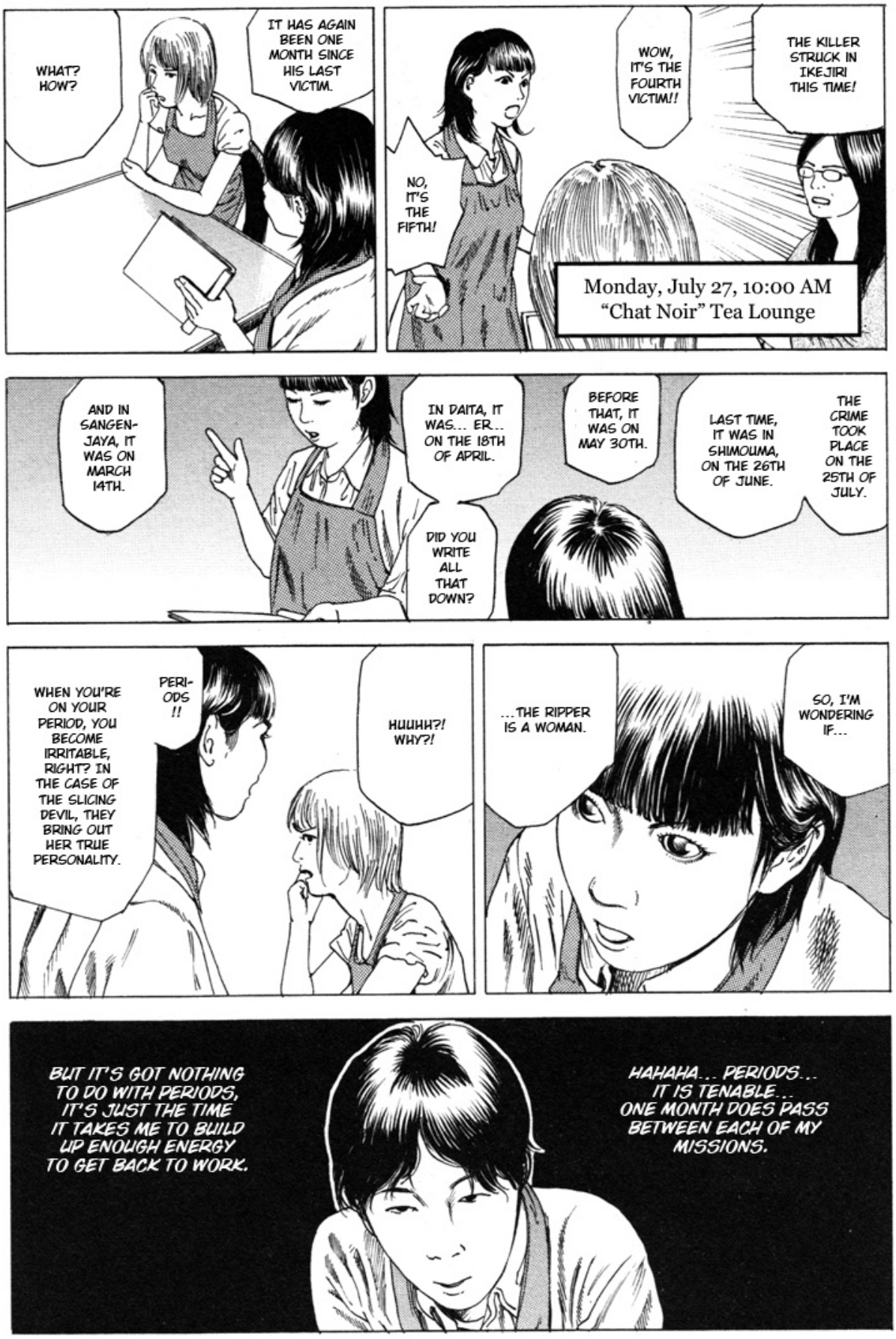
HUF !
AH !
OPEN YOUR MOUTH!
OPEN YOUR MOUTH.
DON'T MOVE! DON'T MOVE! DON'T MOVE! DON'T MOVE!
MMM!
GHHH !
DON'T MOVE!
HUMPF !
BAM
OUCH!
DON'T MOVE.
THIS IS WHAT MAKES YOU SO PATHETIC !!
THIS!
YOU DON'T KNOW? I'LL TELL YOU, THEN...
DO YOU KNOW WHY YOU'RE SO PATHETIC?
DO YOU ?
ZUUUP
POF
CRRR
CRRR

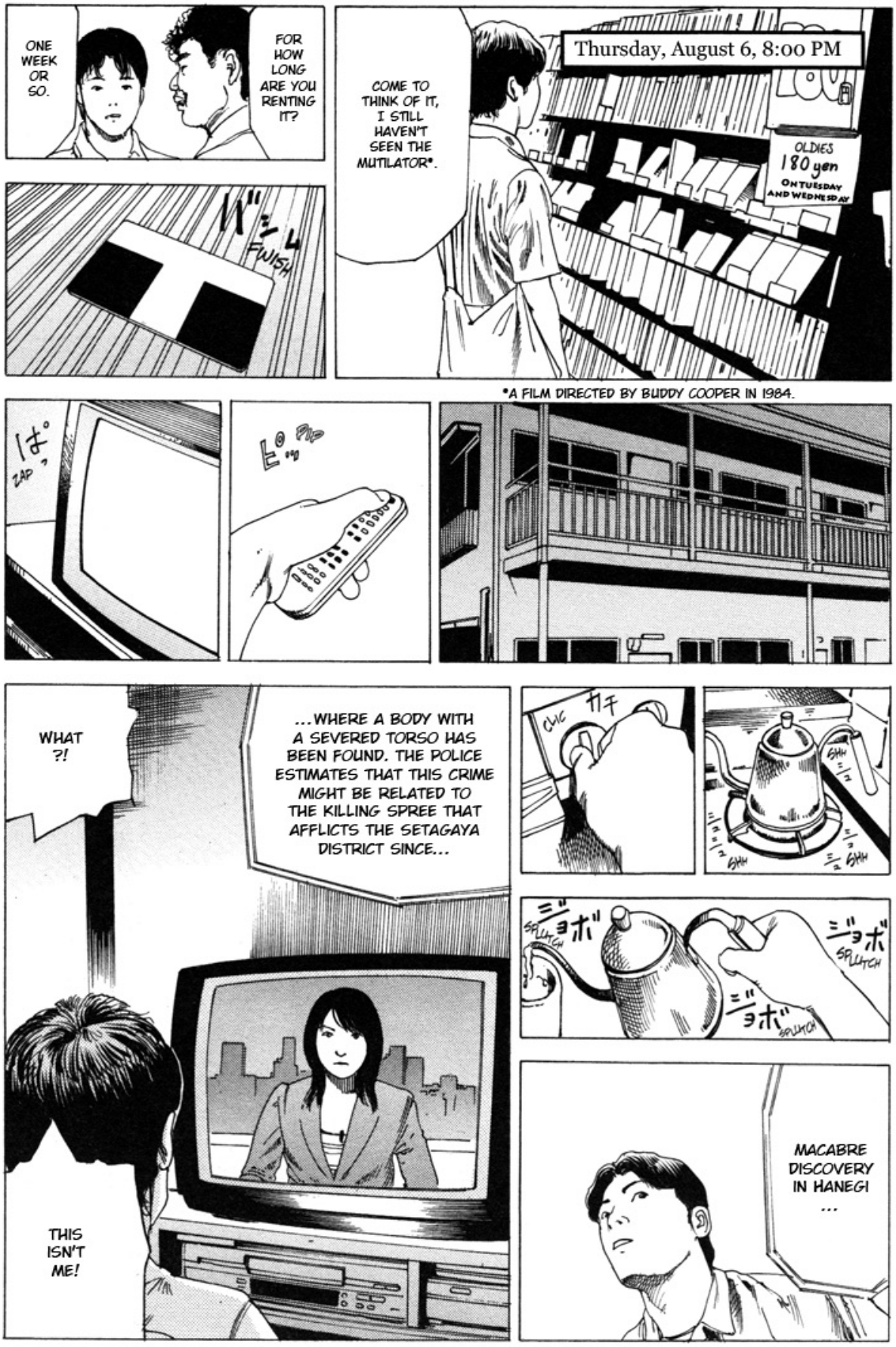
HMPF
YOU'RE IN LUCK, I DID BRING MY RECTIFYING TOOLS WITH ME!
GGGH !!!
THAT'S WHY TODAY I'LL RID YOU OF YOUR MEDIOCRITY!
SPLITCH
SPLITCH
SPLITCH
MMM!
MMM!
I HAVE TO RECTIFY YOU FAILURES OR YOU'LL STAY FAILURES FOREVER!
MMMM !
PFFF... YOU LOOK LIKE A SAUSAGE!
IT APPEARS THAT IT'S VERY BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH.
GNNN
GNNN
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE CORSETS WORN BY THE WOMEN REPRESENTED ON MEDIEVAL PAINTINGS? CRAZY, ISN'T IT? IT IS SO TIGHT, THEIR ORGANS MUST HAVE BEEN HYPER-CONSTRICTED.
GNNN
CRRAC
ROL
BAM
THIS IS WHAT GAVE ME THE IDEA OF MAKING THIS THING.


I PULL OUT.
I JAB.
I RE-MOVE.
PFFF... IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE YOUR-SELF!


ONCE YOUR BLOOD HAS DRAINED OUT, I'LL USE THIS...

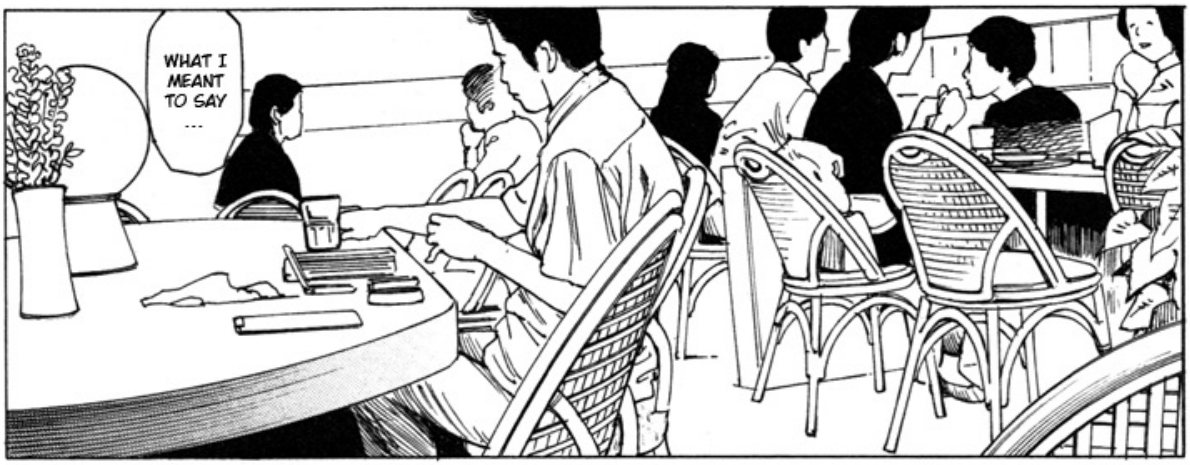
HAAA...
HAAA...
HAAA...
URGH ...
UUH...
BURGH ...
I'VE GOT NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO ACCOMPLISH MY MISSION.
ADMIRABLE WORK. NOBODY ELSE CAN DO IT.
I'M DOING WHAT MUST BE DONE.
IT IS TRUE, ISN'T IT, BROTHER? THAT I'M RIGHT?
I'M RIGHT. WHAT I'M DOING IS JUST. I EMBODY JUSTICE.
LET'S GO!
COME ON!
I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!
THANKS, BRO!
YES INDEED, KOTARO! YOU ARE RIGHT!!!


WHAT? HOW?
IT HAS AGAIN BEEN ONE MONTH SINCE HIS LAST VICTIM.
NO, IT'S THE FIFTH!
WOW, IT'S THE FOURTH VICTIM!!
THE KILLER STRUCK IN IKEJIRI THIS TIME!
Monday, July 27, 10:00 AM
"Chat Noir" Tea Lounge
AND IN SANGEN-JAYA, IT WAS ON MARCH 14TH.
IN DAITA, IT WAS... ER... ON THE 18TH OF APRIL.
BEFORE THAT, IT WAS ON MAY 30TH.
LAST TIME, IT WAS IN SHIMOUMA, ON THE 26TH OF JUNE.
THE CRIME TOOK PLACE ON THE 25TH OF JULY.
DID YOU WRITE ALL THAT DOWN?
WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR PERIOD, YOU BECOME IRRITABLE, RIGHT? IN THE CASE OF THE SLICING DEVIL, THEY BRING OUT HER TRUE PERSONALITY.
PERI-ODS !!
HUUHH?! WHY?!
...THE RIPPER IS A WOMAN.
SO, I'M WONDERING IF...
BUT IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH PERIODS, IT'S JUST THE TIME IT TAKES ME TO BUILD UP ENOUGH ENERGY TO GET BACK TO WORK.
HAHAHA... PERIODS... IT IS TENABLE... ONE MONTH DOES PASS BETWEEN EACH OF MY MISSIONS.


ONE WEEK OR SO.
FOR HOW LONG ARE YOU RENTING IT?
FWISH
COME TO THINK OF IT, I STILL HAVEN'T SEEN THE MUTILATOR*.
Thursday, August 6, 8:00 PM
OLDIES
180 yen
ON TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY
*A FILM DIRECTED BY BUDDY COOPER IN 1984.
ZAP
CHIC
SPLUTCH
SPLUTCH
SPLUTCH
WHAT ?!
...WHERE A BODY WITH A SEVERED TORSO HAS BEEN FOUND. THE POLICE ESTIMATES THAT THIS CRIME MIGHT BE RELATED TO THE KILLING SPREE THAT AFFLICTS THE SETAGAYA DISTRICT SINCE...
THIS ISN'T ME!
MACABRE DISCOVERY IN HANEGI ...

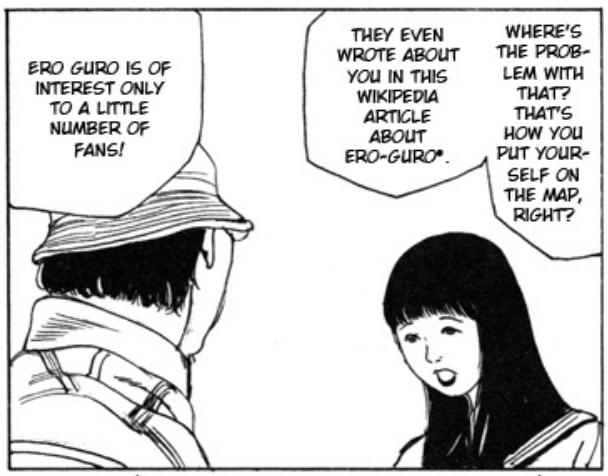
THE MANGA ARTIST

1



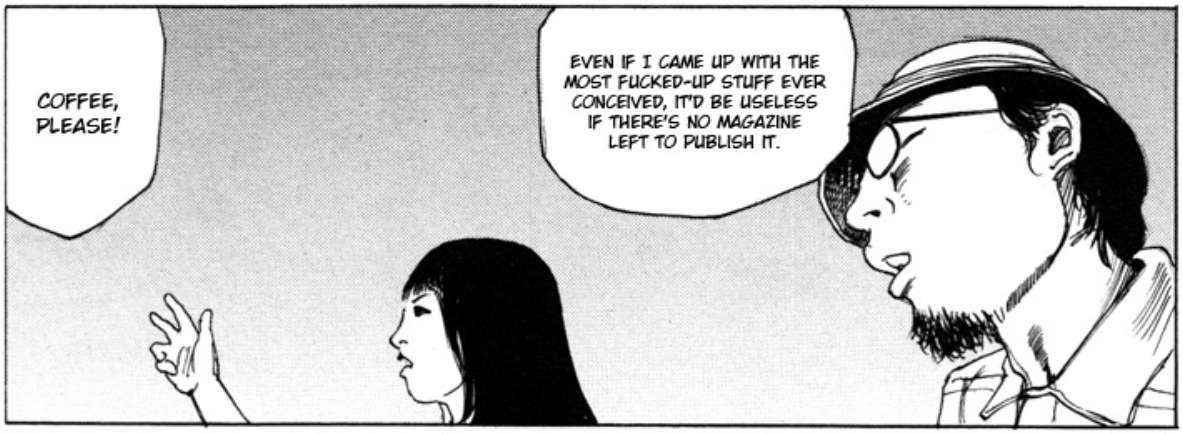
IT'S THE SAME FOR MANGAS. IT'S COOL TO DRAW DISMEMBERED BODIES AND EXPOSED GUTS BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH ELSE TO IT.
VIOLENCE, YOU GET USED TO IT.
...IS THAT, MAYBE, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO MOVE ON AND DO SOMETHING ELSE.

...WHEN I CAME OUT WITH SPARKLE! GREATER EAST-ASIAN CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE, IT KIND OF MADE A SPLASH AND IT GOT COVERED IN A FEW NEWSPAPER ARTICLES...
HOW-EVER, IT'S TRUE THAT ...


ERO GURO IS OF INTEREST ONLY TO A LITTLE NUMBER OF FANS!
THEY EVEN WROTE ABOUT YOU IN THIS WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE ABOUT ERO-GURO*.
WHERE'S THE PROB-LEM WITH THAT? THAT'S HOW YOU PUT YOUR-SELF ON THE MAP, RIGHT?

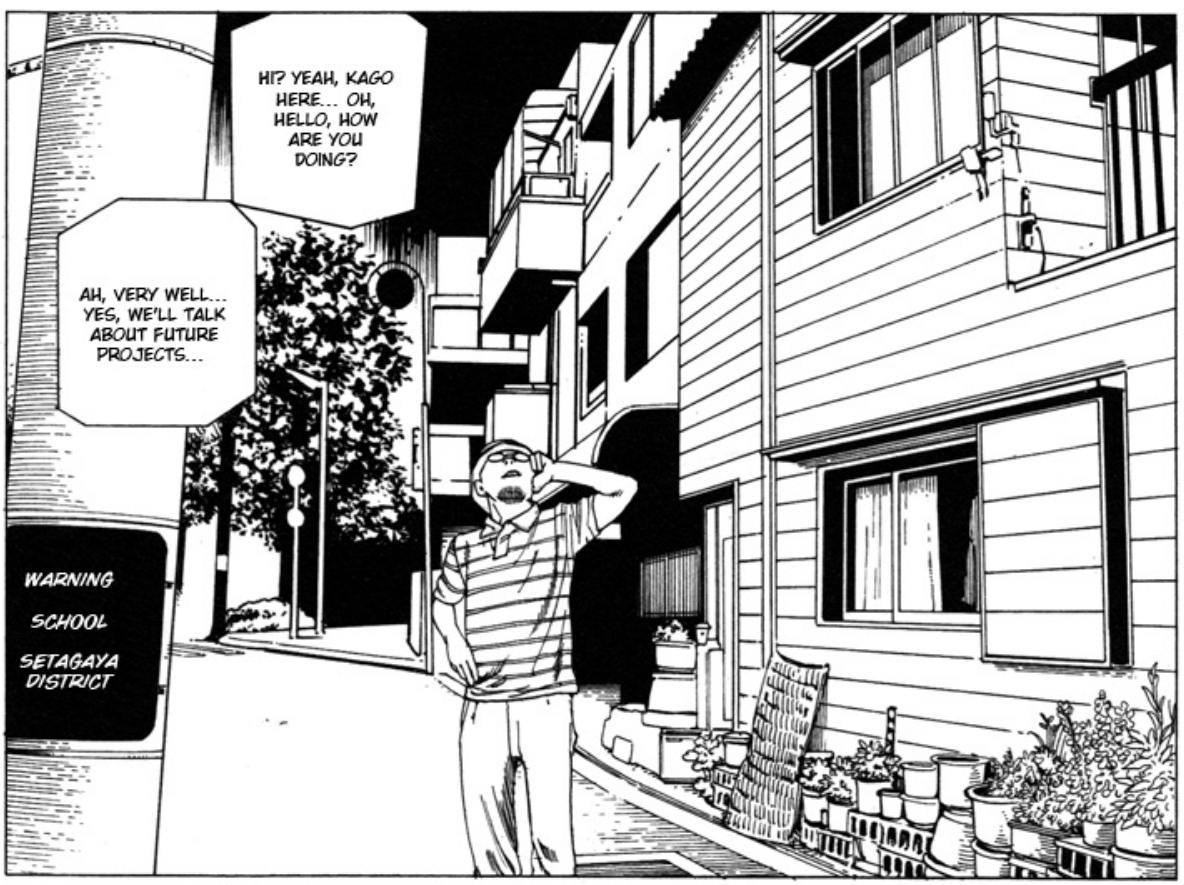
*THIS TERM IS USED TO DESCRIBE ARTISTIC WORKS FROM VARIOUS DISCIPLINES (LITERATURE, CINEMA, MANGA, PHOTOGRAPHY...) THAT BLEND EROTICISM AND DECADENCE; WITHIN THESE WORKS, SEXUAL PERVERSIONS, SADISM AND PHYSICAL DEFORMITIES ARE DEPICTED WITH EXUBERANCE.

LISTEN ...
I DON'T SEE WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT YOU MAKING MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD MANGA.
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE USED THIS TEMPORARY SUCCESS TO WRITE STORIES FOR A MORE GENERAL AUDIENCE.
BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M HAVING REGRETS.
THANKS TO THAT, I WAS ABLE TO PUBLISH COMIC MASSACRE IN FRONT OF THE STATION AND EVERYTHING'S PEACEFUL, I RECEIVED NUMEROUS OFFERS FROM MAGAZINES AND I STARTED MAKING MORE MONEY.
IT'S THE SAME THING FOR TV: IN ORDER FOR A SHOW THAT'S ONLY AIRED AT MIDNIGHT TO BE BROADCAST DURING PRIME TIME, IT MUST FIT THE MOLD AND PLEASE A WIDE AUDIENCE.
TO SELL, OR, TO BE MORE ACCURATE, TO SURVIVE AS A MANGA ARTIST, I HAVE TO WRITE ACCESSIBLE STUFF!
MAGAZINES DISAPPEAR ONE AFTER THE OTHER!
THIS IS WHAT'S GOING ON AT THIS VERY MOMENT IN THE WORLD OF PUBLISHING!
WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN ALL THE MIDNIGHT SHOWS ARE CANCELLED, TO "CUT THE COSTS", AS THEY SAY?
I KNOW BUT THAT'S NOT WHERE THE PROBLEM LIES.
IT SUCKS IF YOU FIT THE MOLD.

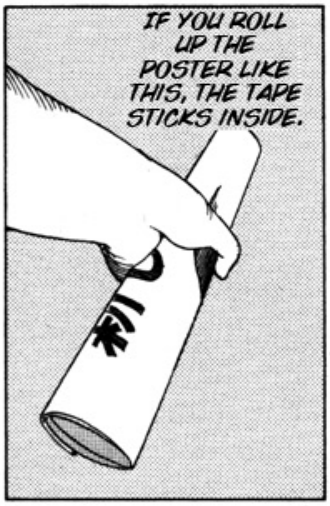

COFFEE, PLEASE!
EVEN IF I CAME UP WITH THE MOST FUCKED-UP STUFF EVER CONCEIVED, IT'D BE USELESS IF THERE'S NO MAGAZINE LEFT TO PUBLISH IT.

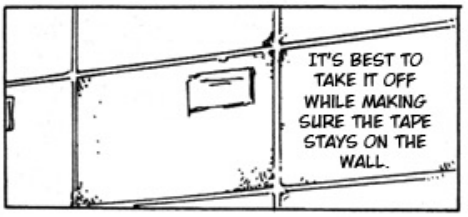
YEAH, YEAH, I UNDER-STAND... GOOD LUCK, THEN...
...I HAVE TO FIND IDEAS THAT WILL APPEAL TO A BROADER PUBLIC.
ANYWAY, IF I WANT TO CONTINUE WORKING ...

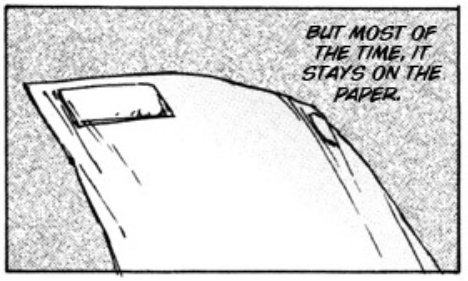
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING ?


HI? YEAH, KAGO HERE... OH, HELLO, HOW ARE YOU DOING?
AH, VERY WELL... YES, WE'LL TALK ABOUT FUTURE PROJECTS...
WARNING
SCHOOL
SETAGAYA DISTRICT

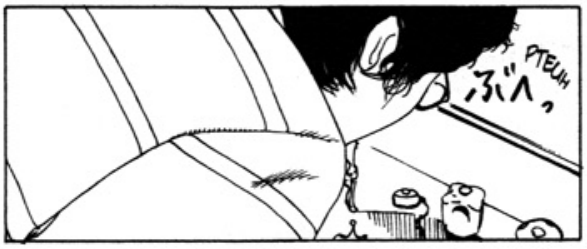
ピッ
PIP
IN THAT CASE, I WILL COME BY YOUR WORKSHOP TOMORROW AT 2 PM.
AND STORIES ABOUT FIGHTING AREN'T REALLY MY THING...
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DRAW SEXY PERVERTED STUFF...
YEAH, FINALLY... I'LL DO SOMETHING OTHER THAN ERO-GURO... BUT WHAT EXACTLY?
A NEW SETAGAYA, A NEW LEADER
ELECTORAL POSTERS ARE KEPT IN PLACE WITH EXTRA-STRONG DOUBLE SIDED TAPE.
キヨロ
ZIEUTE
A NEW SETAGAYA, A NEW LEADER
WOW, HERE'S SOMEONE WITH A NICE-LOOKING FACE.
SUZUMOTO YOSHIHIRO
SCRATCH
ビッ
THESE POSTERS ARE PRINTED ON NON-TEAR PAPER, SO THERE'S NO CHANCE OF RIPPING THEM.
BUT ONCE YOU'VE DETACHED A CORNER, YOU CAN JUST TAKE IT DOWN SWIFTLY.
YOU HAVE TO WORK A LITTLE BIT TO GET THEM TO COME OFF.



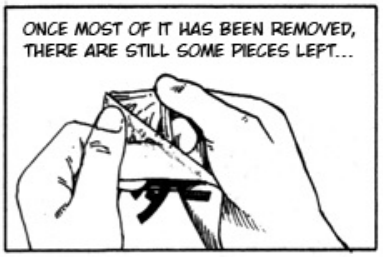


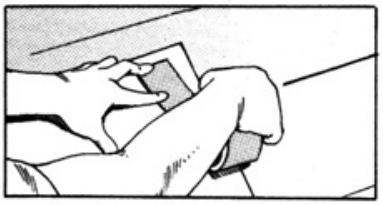


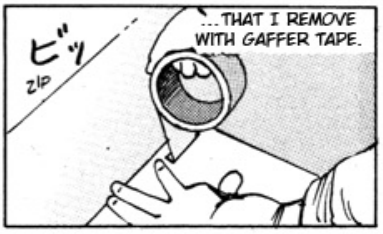
MY RENT COSTS ME 150 000 YEN* EACH MONTH. IT'S AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF MONEY, NOW THAT MY INCOME HAS DECREASED. MAYBE I SHOULD MOVE OUT.

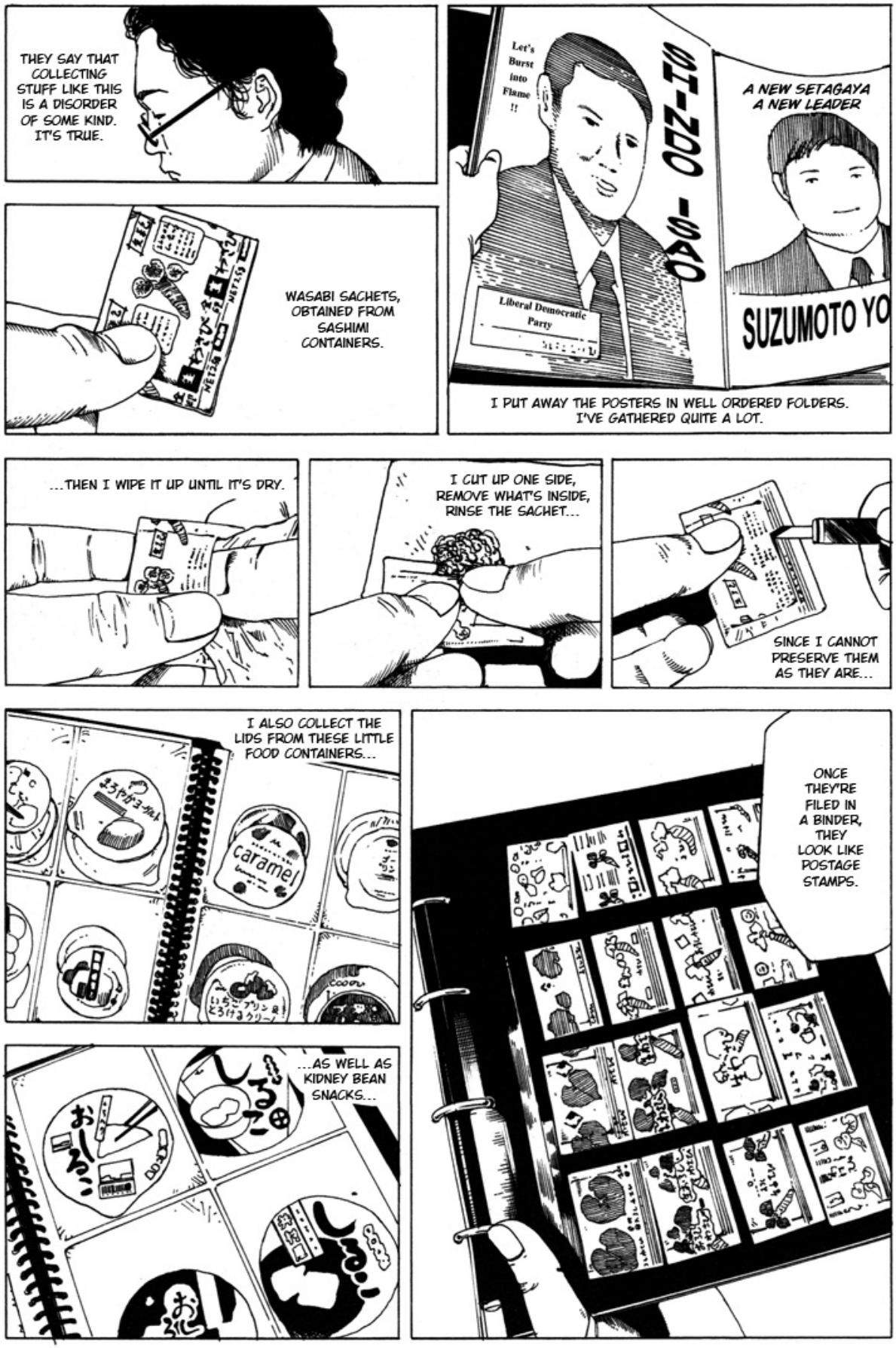


*ABOUT 1400 EUROS

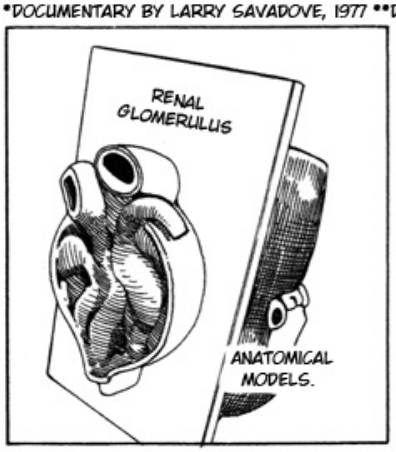


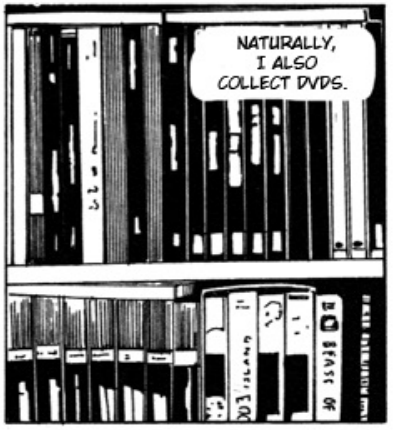


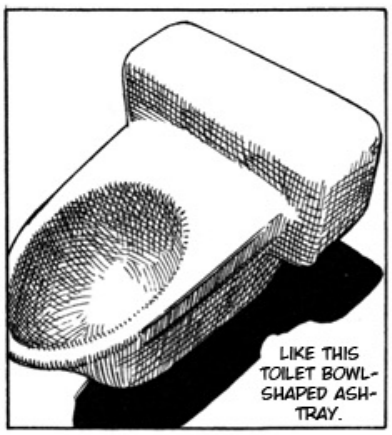


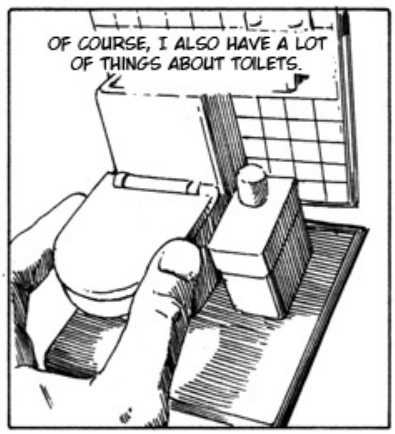

THEY SAY THAT COLLECTING STUFF LIKE THIS IS A DISORDER OF SOME KIND. IT'S TRUE.
WASABI SACHETS, OBTAINED FROM SASHIMI CONTAINERS.
Let's Burst into Flame !!
Liberal Democratic Party
A NEW SETAGAYA A NEW LEADER
SUZUMOTO YO
I PUT AWAY THE POSTERS IN WELL ORDERED FOLDERS. I'VE GATHERED QUITE A LOT.
...THEN I WIPE IT UP UNTIL IT'S DRY.
I CUT UP ONE SIDE, REMOVE WHAT'S INSIDE, RINSE THE SACHET...
SINCE I CANNOT PRESERVE THEM AS THEY ARE...
I ALSO COLLECT THE LIDS FROM THESE LITTLE FOOD CONTAINERS...
caramel
...AS WELL AS KIDNEY BEAN SNACKS...
ONCE THEY'RE FILED IN A BINDER, THEY LOOK LIKE POSTAGE STAMPS.

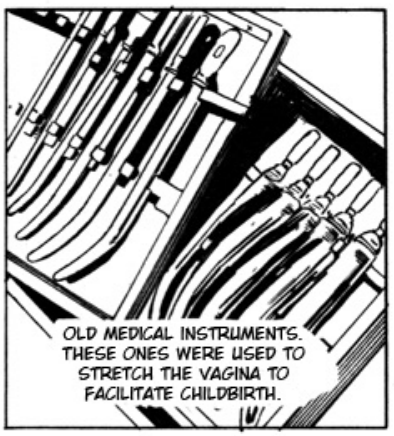
*DOCUMENTARY BY LARRY SAVADOVE, 1977 **DOCUMENTARY BY ALVARO COLVACEVICH, 1976

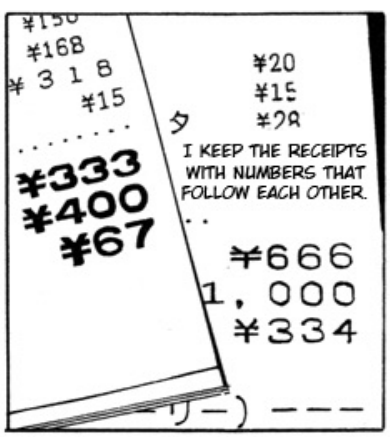




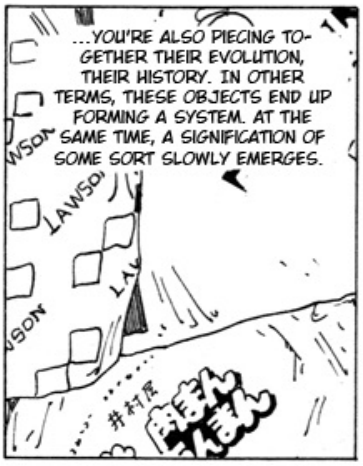




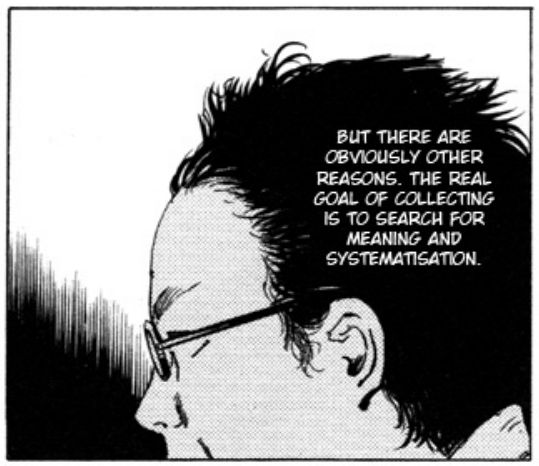




AT MOST, THEY SAY THAT IT AMUSES THEM, THAT IT GIVES THEM A FEELING OF WELL-BEING.
WHEN PEOPLE ASK THEM WHY THEY'RE COLLECTING ALL THESE THINGS, MOST COLLECTORS HAVE SOME TROUBLE COMING UP WITH AN ANSWER.


...YOU'RE ALSO PIECING TOGETHER THEIR EVOLUTION, THEIR HISTORY. IN OTHER TERMS, THESE OBJECTS END UP FORMING A SYSTEM. AT THE SAME TIME, A SIGNIFICATION OF SOME SORT SLOWLY EMERGES.

WHEN YOU'RE GATHERING AND ARCHIVING ORDINARY, INSIGNIFICANT OBJECTS THAT MAY AS WELL BE THROWN AWAY...


BUT THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY OTHER REASONS. THE REAL GOAL OF COLLECTING IS TO SEARCH FOR MEANING AND SYSTEMATISATION.

GOOD... IT'S SHAPING UP NICELY. WHENEVER I'M LOOKING AT MY COLLECTION, I FEEL BETTER.
IN OTHER WORDS, COLLECTING IS STUDYING THE MEANING OF THE EXISTENCE OF THINGS.

RIGHT, I GIVE UP ON ERO GURO! I WILL WRITE A STORY WITHOUT NUDITY, WITHOUT MURDERS, WITHOUT GUTS HANGING OUT, WITHOUT SCAT, S&M OR TORTURE SCENES!

I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF MY CAREER AS A MANGA ARTIST!
PLAF
OH, WHAT AM I DOING? I'VE GOT MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO!

EXCUSE ME?
AH YES, THE MURDERS, IS THAT IT?
PARDON ME FOR ASKING YOU THIS SO CRUDELY BUT HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE SLICING DEVIL CASE?

*A WRITER SOMETIMES REFERED TO AS ONE OF THE FATHERS OF ERO-GURO

IT'S AS THOUGH WE'RE IN A STORY WRITTEN BY EDOGAWA RANPO*...
SEVERAL WOMEN WERE FOUND SLICED IN HALF, JUST LIKE IN THE BLACK DAHLIA CASE...

WHAT?!
LET'S DO A COLUMN ON THIS CASE: "ERO-GURO MANGAKA SHINTARO KAGO ON THE SLICING DEVIL'S TRAIL"!

THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM, IT'LL ONLY BE CONJECTURES... AND RAMBLINGS.
ARE YOU SURE IT'S A GOOD IDEA? ISN'T THE INVESTIGATION STILL UNDER WAY?

THAT'S IT!

HOW DO YOU MEAN? YOU WANT ME TO ESTABLISH THE KILLER'S PROFILE?

YOUR TASK WILL CONSIST OF DRAWING, IN THE MOST REALISTIC WAY POSSIBLE, THE MOMENT WHEN THE YOUNG WOMEN GET CUT IN HALF!
WE WILL HIRE AN AUTHOR FOR THE TEXT.

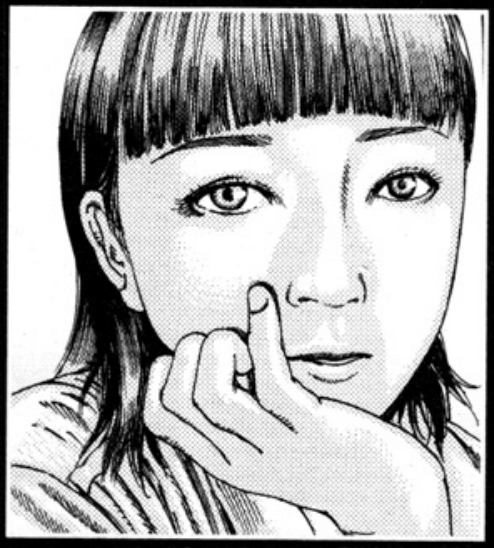
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, WE HAVE TO STOP BEING SO WIMPY. WE NEED GUT-WRENCHING MATERIAL!

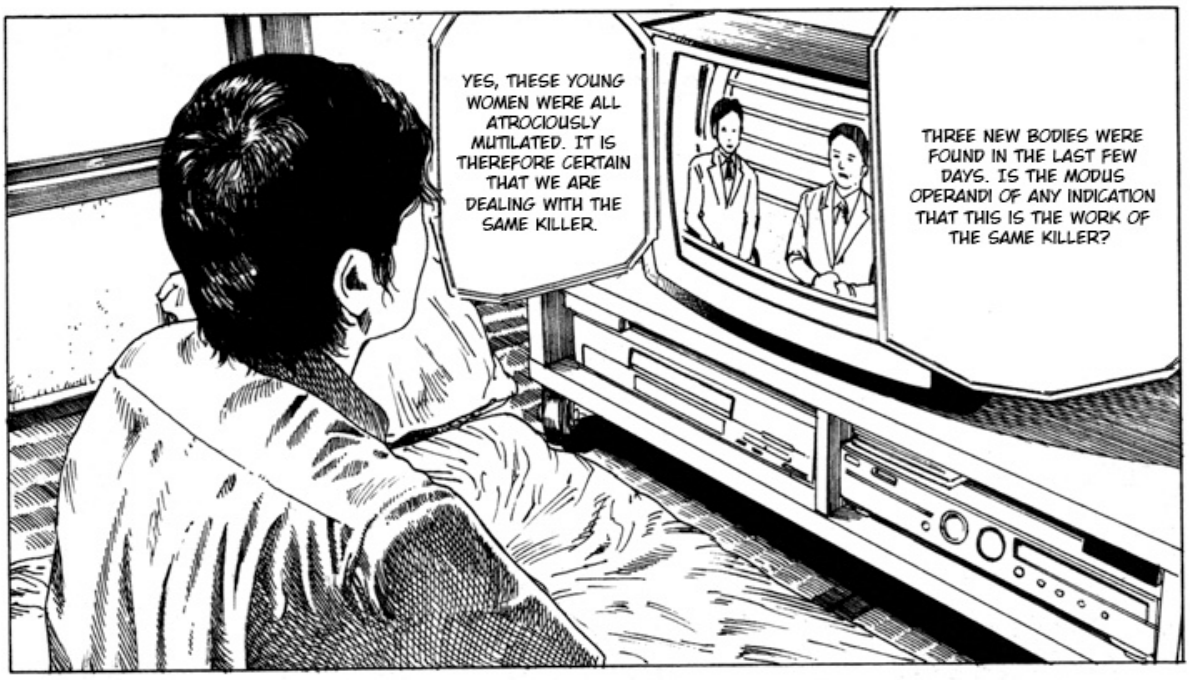
WITH THIS KIND OF MATERIAL, ANY MAGAZINE WOULD BE BANNED FROM THE MASS MARKET!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT SUCH AN IDEA IS AGAINST THE CURRENT TREND? EXPLICIT IMAGES ARE GETTING MORE AND MORE REGULATED.

HUH ?!
...I ACTUALLY WANTED TO DO SOMETHING OTHER THAN ERO GURO...
NO... IT'S JUST THAT...
YOU DO NOT SEEM IMPRESSED ...
...
KAGO WITHOUT ERO GURO? BUT THAT WOULD BE... OF NO INTEREST AT ALL!
IN THAT CASE, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT TO WRITE?
SORRY, THAT DIDN'T COME OUT RIGHT...
MYSTERY STORIES!

THE SLICING DEVIL

2




THREE NEW BODIES WERE FOUND IN THE LAST FEW DAYS. IS THE MODUS OPERANDI OF ANY INDICATION THAT THIS IS THE WORK OF THE SAME KILLER?
YES, THESE YOUNG WOMEN WERE ALL ATROCIOUSLY MUTILATED. IT IS THEREFORE CERTAIN THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH THE SAME KILLER.

SINCE MY LAST MISSION ON THE 25TH OF JULY IN IKEJIRI, THREE PEOPLE WERE FOUND DEAD WITH THEIR TORSO CUT IN HALF...
IN HANEGI AND IN OOHARA...
HOWEVER, I'M NOT THE ONE WHO DID THIS.
IS THE POLICE TRYING TO TRICK THE CULPRIT – THAT WOULD BE ME – INTO MAKING A MISTAKE BY SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION? NO... THEY WOULDN'T DARE EMPLOY SUCH METHODS...

BUT WHO COULD IT BE? TO WHAT END IS HE DOING THIS?
IS HE USING MY WORK TO SATISFY HIS DEPRAVED URGES?!
SHIT! HE'S NOT GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS!

Friday, August 7, 10:00 AM
"Chat Noir" Tea Lounge
THE SLICING DEVIL HAS STRUCK AGAIN! THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS IS NOW UP TO EIGHT!
NO NO NO!
NO!
THAT'S A LOT OF MURDERS ONE RIGHT AFTER THE OTHER, HUH...
CRAZY, RIGHT? HOW MANY WILL HE SLAUGHTER?
SHOW A LITTLE MORE RESPECT FOR THE DEAD, RYOKO!
...I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!
IT HAS ONLY BEEN TWO WEEKS SINCE MY LAST MISSION... I AM NOT FULLY RESTED YET, BUT IT'S TOO BAD...
I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO DO IT!
I AM THE SLICING DEVIL! I WON'T LET ANYONE STEAL MY WORK!
ほめ

HA HA! COME ON, IT'LL BE FUN...
YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE IT, BUT YOU'RE A PERSISTANT GUY!
WELL, WE'VE ARRIVED AT MY PLACE.
ガ"ク
ガ"ク
BLUP
ブ"ル
BRRR
?!
UH...
ARE YOU OKAY?
...
BEUARR-GHHH !
AAAH !!!

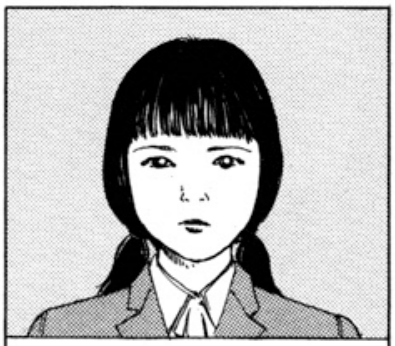
HE MUST STILL BE OUT THERE LOOKING FOR HIS PREY...
I'M SURE HE'LL DO IT AGAIN.
HE'S USING MY WORK TO FULFILL HIS SICK NEEDS...
I KNEW IT, IT WAS TOO EARLY! I DIDN'T RECOVER ENOUGH STRENGTH!
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!
I MESSED UP!
I CAN'T GAIN ACCESS TO A DATABASE LIKE THE ONE USED BY THE POLICE...
ALRIGHT, I KNOW HE'S IN THE SETAGAYA DISTRICT BUT WHERE EXACTLY SHOULD I SEARCH FOR HIM?
HOW, DAMN IT?
HOW CAN I PIN HIM DOWN?
I COULD PATROL THE STREETS AT NIGHT... URGH, WHAT AM I SAYING?
OTHER THAN THAT... WHAT ELSE? WHAT ELSE?
AND THE FACT THAT HE'S IMITATING ME PROVES THAT HE'S DUMB... HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO THINK FOR HIMSELF.
I FIGURE HE MUST BE AROUND MY AGE...
PROFILING, AS IT'S CALLED.
I COULD TRY TO CLOSE IN ON HIM WITH DEDUCTIONS ...
AM I REALLY CAPABLE OF DOING THIS?

DON'T THROW IN THE TOWEL, KOTARO!!
BRO-THER ...
AAAH... I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!
WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT CAN I DO?
I MUST STAY STRONG!
YOU'RE RIGHT, I MUSN'T GIVE UP!
AKIHIKO !
BROTHER !!!
I KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS A GIFT FOR THIS KIND OF THING!
AND NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
WHAT?! YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING! I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE INTERESTED IN CASES LIKE THIS, KOTARO!
Friday, August 14, 1:00 PM
"Chat Noir" Tea Lounge

IT TAKES A LOT OF STRENGTH TO KILL SO MANY PEOPLE IN A ROW AND TO SEVER THEIR TORSOS.
FOR STARTERS, THE KILLER HAS TO BE A MAN.
HE HE HE
SINCE YOU'RE ASKING ME SO NICELY ...
THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO CALL UPON YOUR PROFILING SKILLS.
WELL, IT'S A BIT SCARY... THE KILLER MIGHT BE VERY CLOSE...
MY PRO-FILING SKILLS ?!
THE FACT THAT HE'S PERSISTING IN SEVERING THE TORSOS OF HIS VICTIMS MAY BE HIS WAY OF EXPRESSING HIS DEEP RESENTMENT TOWARDS WOMEN.
IF HE WAS KILLING CHILDREN, WE COULD INCLUDE TEENAGERS BUT HE'S ONLY TARGETING WOMEN WHO ARE TWENTY OR OLDER.
I WOULD SAY HE'S BETWEEN TWENTY AND FORTY YEARS OLD.
YOU ...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?!
HUH... ?!
I'M WONDERING IF THERE'S ANOTHER KILLER..
UP UNTIL NOW, THE MURDERS WERE LESS FREQUENT... WHY?
ABOUT THAT... THEY'VE RECENTLY FOUND THREE DEAD BODIES WITHIN JUST A FEW DAYS, RIGHT?
THAT'S TRUE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T YOU FIND IT ODD?

KOTARO, YOU...
UH...
...
YOU'RE A GENIUS! SUCH PERSPICACITY! I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT!!
I'VE GATHERED INFORMATION ABOUT THE VICTIMS. PHOTOS, MEDIA COVERAGE, INFO I'VE FOUND ON THE NET...
Unsolved murders in the Setagaya district
The Slicing Devil is wreaking havoc!
BUT IT WASN'T FOR THE FACT THAT THREE PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME. LOOK AT THIS...
ACTUALLY, IT SEEMED ODD TO ME TOO...

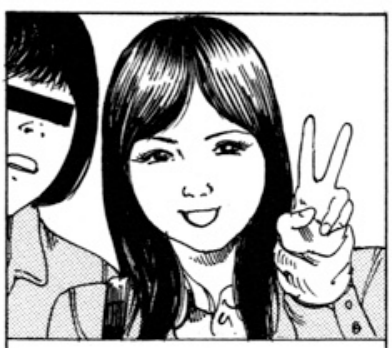
Name of the victim: Maki Hayama, 23 years old
Scene of the crime: Daita
Estimated time of death: Saturday, April 18, Midnight



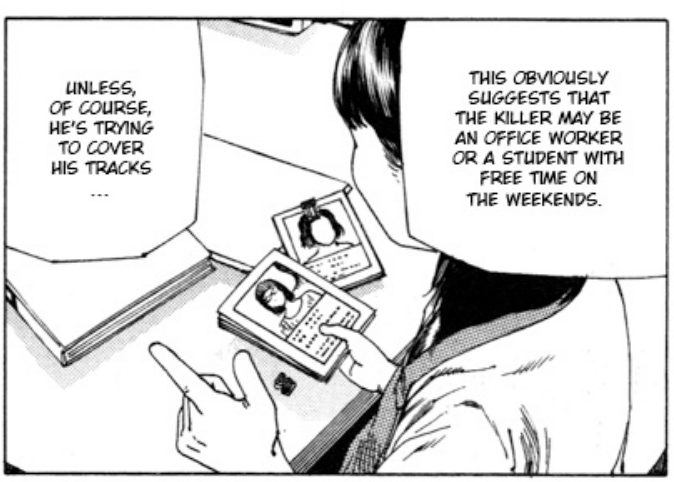
Name of the victim: Suzuko Kazamura, 24 years old
Scene of the crime: Sangenjaya
Estimated time of death: Saturday, March 14, 22h

Name of the victim: Midori Asuka, 25 years old
Scene of the crime: Ikejiri
Estimated time of death: Saturday, July 25, 22h

Name of the victim: Yuriko Misaki, 27 years old
Scene of the crime: Shimouma
Estimated time of death: Friday, June 26, 23h

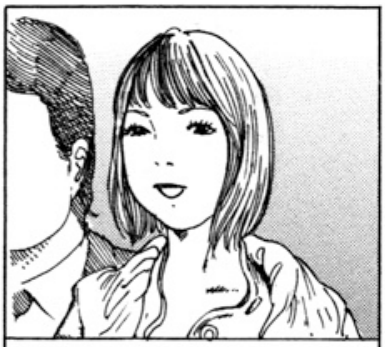


Name of the victim: Mai Oogi, 25 years old
Scene of the crime: Higashi Kitazawa
Estimated time of death: Saturday, May 30, 23h


UNLESS, OF COURSE, HE'S TRYING TO COVER HIS TRACKS ...
THIS OBVIOUSLY SUGGESTS THAT THE KILLER MAY BE AN OFFICE WORKER OR A STUDENT WITH FREE TIME ON THE WEEKENDS.

Name of the victim: Emi Tama, 25 years old
Scene of the crime:
Tokorozawa (where the body was found)
Estimated time of death: Wednesday, August 5, 13h

Name of the victim: Junko Kazami, 25 years old
Scene of the crime:
Oohara (where the body was found)
Estimated time of death: Tuesday, August 4, 18h



Name of the victim: Takeko Yuki, 25 years old
Scene of the crime:
Hanegi (where the body was found)
Estimated time of death: Sunday, August 2, 13h

IF WE ASSUME THAT IT'S THE SAME MURDERER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE RESIGNED OR GOT FIRED FROM HIS JOB, THUS GIVING HIM MORE FREE TIME...
THE ESTIMATED TIME OF DEATH IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FOR THESE LAST THREE MURDERS.

HE PROBABLY IS UNEMPLOYED OR A WORKER WHO CAN FREELY MANAGE HIS SCHEDULE.
BUT IF, AS YOU'RE SUGGESTING, THE LAST THREE MURDERS ARE THE WORK OF A DIFFERENT KILLER, A COPYCAT...

N... NO... IT'S JUST ...
IT SEEMS LIKE THAT MAKES YOU HAPPY...
THAT'S IT! THIS GUY REALLY IS FUCKING STUPID, HUH?
IF WE ARE INDEED DEALING WITH AN IMITATOR, HE'S REALLY DUMB... INITIALLY, THERE WAS ONLY ONE VICTIM A MONTH. MESSING WITH THE FREQUENCY OF THE MURDERS WILL ONLY DRAW MORE ATTENTION.

OTHER THAN THAT... THE INFORMATION WE HAVE RIGHT NOW IS NOT ENOUGH TO DETERMINE WHAT THEY WERE INTERESTED IN OR WHO THEY WERE HANGING OUT WITH...
MAYBE ...
MAYBE THE KILLER IS INTO THESE KINDS OF GIRLS?
EACH YOUNG WOMAN WAS BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY YEARS OLD BUT THEY ALL HAD VERY DIFFERENT JOBS... IF WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON, WE'D BETTER LOOK AT THEIR PHYSICAL RESEMBLANCES.
WE ALSO HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT CONNECTS THE VICTIMS...
I'VE JUST FOUND OUT SOMETHING INTERESTING...
WAIT A MOMENT ...
JUST WHAT I THOUGHT... PEOPLE LIKE US CAN'T GET VERY FAR IN AN INVESTIGATION LIKE THIS...
Name of the victim: Emi Tama, 25 years old
Scene of the crime:
Tokorozawa (where the body was found)
Estimated time of death: Wednesday, August 5, 13h
Name of the victim: Junko Kazami, 25 years old
Scene of the crime:
Ochara (where the body was found)
Estimated time of death: Tuesday, August 4, 18h
THE LAST THREE VICTIMS, TAKEKO YUKI, JUNKO KAZAMI AND EMI TAMA... AT FIRST GLANCE, THERE'S NO LINK BETWEEN THEM...
JUNKO KAZAMA (MAIDEN NAME: TAMA)
HERE, LOOK ...
TAKEKO YUKI... MAIDEN NAME: TAMA?
BUT LOOK AT THIS NEWSPAPER CLIPPING ...
Takeko Yuki, 25 years old (maiden name: Tama)
The Slicing Devil takes another life

THEY'RE TRIPLETS ?!
TAKEKO TAMA, JUNKO TAMA, EMI TAMA...
AS FOR EMI TAMA, SHE IS SINGLE.
BUT WHAT HE WANTED ALL ALONG WAS TO KILL THESE TRIPLETS!
I SEE... SO THIS GUY, THIS COPYCAT... HE TRIED TO PASS IT OFF AS THE WORK OF THE SLICING DEVIL...
YES, THIS IS VERY LIKELY.
THEN AGAIN, I SUPPOSE THE POLICE IS ALREADY AWARE OF IT...
THE COPYCAT THEORY IS VERY INTERESTING, OF COURSE, BUT...
IT COULD BE THAT THE KILLER'S ULTIMATE AIM WAS TO ELIMINATE THE TRIPLETS AND THAT HE COMMITTED THE FIRST FIVE MURDERS SO THAT THE WHOLE THING WOULD LOOK LIKE THE WORK OF A MADMAN.
WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT ALL THESE WOMEN WERE KILLED BY A SINGLE PERSON.
NOT SO FAST!
HEY YOU TWO!

CRAP!
BREAK'S OVER! ARE YOU PLANNING ON SCREWING AROUND MUCH LONGER?!
ER... NOTHING IN PARTI-CULAR...
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT WITH FUJIOKA?
HIGA-SHINO...
YES?
I DON'T LIKE IT... I'M ALL FOR SYMPATHY BETWEEN COWORKERS BUT DON'T EVER LET IT SLIP YOUR MIND THAT YOU TWO AREN'T OF THE SAME SEX. DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID...

...
...
HI!
"DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID", ARE YOU KIDDING ME? ...MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
PLOK
...
...
...
SO THE KILLER HAD SOMETHING AGAINST THOSE TRIPLETS... THIS MEANS THAT THE COPYCAT IS LINKED TO THE VICTIMS IN SOME WAY...

IN THAT CASE, COME WITH ME! I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING!
KOTARO! WAIT!
ARE YOU GOING TO THE MOVIES TODAY?
NO, I WAS THINKING OF GOING BACK HOME.
LOOK, THESE ARE THE WORK SCHEDULES.
IT COULD BE HAYAMI ?!
Saturday, August 14, 8:00 PM
I GOT THEM FROM HIS PUNCH CARD.
ON AUGUST THE 2ND AT 1PM, THE 4TH AT 6PM AND ON THE 5TH AT 1PM.
AND THIS IS WHEN THE SLICING DEVIL KILLED HIS LAST THREE VICTIMS.

...
BUT THIS ISN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM A SUSPECT...
YOU SEE, THIS FITS PERFECTLY WITH HAYAMI'S SCHEDULE!
IT TAKES AT LEAST ONE HOUR TO GET FROM THE TEA LOUNGE TO THE CRIME SCENES!
THERE'S MORE...
I'VE SEEN STAINS THAT LOOKED LIKE BLOOD ON HIS CLOTHES AND SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE A SAW IN HIS BAG.
AND HE'S WEIRD SOMETIMES... HE MUST BE HIDING SOMETHING.
AH, YOU WERE THERE...
I SAW YOU TWO FIGHTING A SHORT WHILE AGO.
IT'S JUST THAT... I'M UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST HAYAMI...
WHAT, AREN'T YOU CONVINCED ?
HMM, I SEE...

READ THIS ONE I'VE JUST RECEIVED.
From: Hayami
Subject: CUT THE CRAP
DON'T FORGET WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU'RE FROM. IT'S THANKS TO ME YOU'RE GETTING BY TODAY. YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME AND
ACTUALLY, HE'S BEEN STALKING ME FOR OVER A MONTH.
AND HE SENDS ME TEXTS EACH DAY.
ONE TIME, HE EVEN FOLLOWED ME HOME.
WELL...
IF I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING... YOU WANT ME TO BE YOUR BODYGUARD, RIGHT?
GREAT!
I'LL GO PREPARE OUR-SELVES SOME-THING TO EAT, THEN!
IF YOU THINK I CAN DO IT, THEN...
DO YOU MIND?
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I FEEL SECURE WHEN I'M WITH YOU...

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
HUH ?!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE GOOD AT DOING THIS KIND OF STUFF!
WOAH... INCRED-IBLE!
HEY WAIT, IT'S ALREADY THIS LATE? I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO TOMORROW MORNING!
HERE, DAMIEN: OMEN II.
SINCE WE'RE AT IT, WE COULD WATCH A MOVIE WHILE WE'RE EATING!
WHAT?! DON'T YOU TRUST ME?
AND DON'T EVEN THINK OF SPYING ON ME!
I'LL TAKE A SHOWER FIRST. START WITHOUT ME.
I'M NOT SHAKING... AND I'M NOT EVEN FEELING THE NEED TO ACCOMPLISH MY "MISSION" ...
WEIRD ...
...

AKIHIKO
...
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WAIT FOR ME, BRO...

AKIHIKO !

!

AH!
はっ
SHE'S STILL TAKING A SHOWER?
MMM... I DOZED OFF FOR A MOMENT THERE...
BAM
ばん
RYOKO!
PSHHHUUU
ザアアア

HA !
HIJF

OUAAAH !

THE MANGA ARTIST

2

MYSTERY STORIES ?!
HMMM... THESE SERIES ARE INDEED BASED ON MYSTERIES BUT...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? INVESTIGATIONS LIKE IN CASE CLOSED OR KINDAICHI CASE FILES?
THESE TWO TYPES OF MYSTERIES FORM THE CORE OF CRIME FICTION BUT I FAIL TO SEE WHAT'D BE INTERESTING ABOUT WRITING THESE KINDS OF STORIES TODAY.
...THEY'RE ALSO HOWDUNIT MYSTERIES, OR TO PUT IT DIFFERENTLY, "HOW DID THE KILLER PROCEED?"
THEY'RE WHODUNIT MYSTERIES, IN OTHER WORDS, "WHO'S THE KILLER?"...
...I'LL RESORT TO NARRATIVE MANIPULATION!
IT'S VERY SIMPLE ...
WHAT WILL YOU DO, THEN?

HAVE YOU EVER READ CRIME FICTION?
LIKE SHERLOCK HOLMES, HERCULE POIROT, KOGORO AKECHI...
EXACTLY!
NARRATIVE MANIPULATION?
IN THE TV FILMS WITH KOGORO AKECHI AND SHIGERU AMACHI THE "BOOB SEQUENCE" WAS A MUST...
AH, YES... THERE WAS A "MYSTERY" SIDE TO THIS SERIES...
THE "HOT TUB MURDERS" SERIES REALLY WAS SOMETHING! THERE ALWAYS WERE SOME GIRLS WITH THEIR BREASTS EXPOSED!
AAAH, I SEE... I USED TO WATCH TUESDAY'S THRILLERS ON TELEVISION...
YES, THERE WAS A TV SHOW CALLED TRICK, WITH YUKIE NAKAMA AS THE LEAD ACTRESS.
ER... DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN BY "TRICKS"?
IN CRIME FICTION, OR MYSTERY STORIES, THERE'S A DEVICE CALLED NARRATIVE MANIPULATION THAT RELIES ON TRICKS.
WHATEVER, LET'S PUT THAT ASIDE FOR NOW.
ALTHOUGH... I COULD PUT SOME IN THERE ANYWAY...
HOWEVER, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, WE'LL HAVE TO DO WITHOUT THEM!
IN OTHER WORDS, THE CHARACTERS ARE FOOLED BY THE KILLER'S TRICKS.
BUT AT THE END OF EACH EPISODE WE DISCOVER THAT THERE'S NOTHING UNEARTHLY ABOUT IT: THE VICTIMS HAVE ALL BEEN KILLED BY A HUMAN BEING.
THAT'S NOT REALLY THE BEST EXAMPLE BUT IT'LL DO... IN TRICK, PARANORMAL PHENOMENA HAPPEN AND PEOPLE DIE.

EVERYTHING SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT THE MAN KILLED HIMSELF...
THE DOOR IS LOCKED; THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE FROM THE INSIDE.
...SO THE POLICE CONCLUDES THAT IT'S A SUICIDE.
LET'S SAY SOMEONE FINDS A HANGED MAN IN A ROOM.
IN CRIME FICTION, WHAT MAY BE THE MOST WELL-KNOWN TRICK IS THE LOCKED ROOM MYSTERY.
JOHN DICKSON CARR IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS AUTHORS TO HAVE USED THIS DEVICE.
THUS, I HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS MAN WAS MURDERED !!!
SOMEONE TIED HIM UP, MADE HIM DRINK AND TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS INTOXICATION TO HANG HIM.
...NOTICES A LIQUOR BOTTLE IN THE ROOM ...
...AND ROPE MARKS ON THE BODY'S WRISTS.
BUT A FAMOUS DETECTIVE ...
THE STRING ...
ZUP
...TRIGGERS THE BOLT THAT'S INSIDE.
ZUP ZUP ZUP
HE PULLS THE STRING FROM THE OUTSIDE.
I WILL EXPLAIN TO YOU THE SECRET OF THE LOCKED ROOM.
IF THIS IS A HOMICIDE, HOW DID THE KILLER MANAGE TO ESCAPE?!
NONSENSE! THE DECEASED WAS ALONE IN THIS ROOM WHEN WE FOUND HIM!
THE KILLER LEAVES THE ROOM.
A STRING IS ATTACHED TO THE EXTREMITY OF THE LATCH...
AND WITH THIS MECHANISM ...
PASSES THROUGH HERE
KNOT

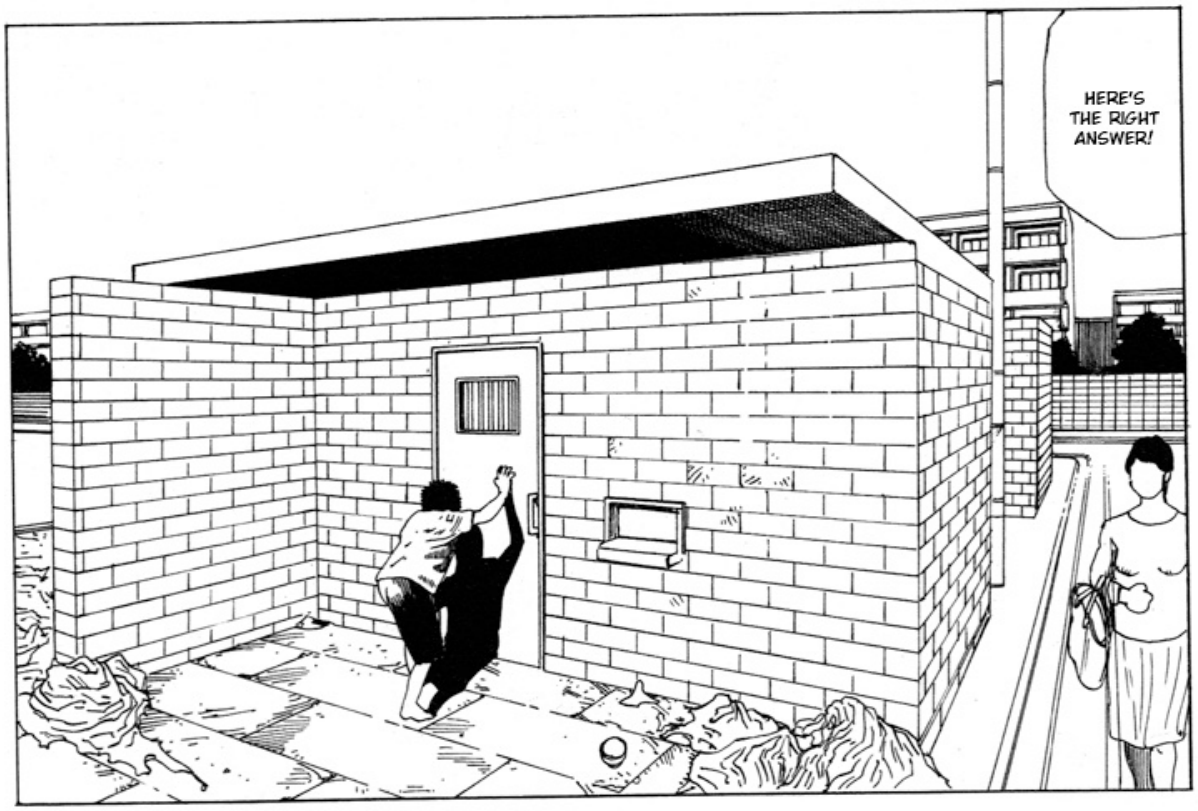
WHAT-EVER !!!
SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING ANY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT COULD COME UP WITH.
SHHHLAAAC!
!!
THE POLICE-MEN?
ERR ...
ACCORDING TO YOU, WHO GOT TRICKED IN THIS CASE?
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S AN ELABORATE TRICK OR NOT.
WELL, YEAH... IT SEEMS QUITE OBVIOUS...
DON'T YOU AGREE?
CHARA-CTERS IN THE STORY!
AND WHO ARE THE POLICE-MEN?
EXACTLY! THE POLICE-MEN!
BUT IN A STORY THAT USES NARRATIVE MANIPULATION, IT'S DIFFERENT.
IN MOST CRIME FICTION NOVELS, THE CHARACTERS ARE THE ONES WHO GET TRICKED.

BUT HE SAYS THAT HE HAS LONG HAIR, AND THAT HE HAD SEX WITH A MAN.
THE NARRATOR TALKS ABOUT HIMSELF WITHOUT REVEALING HIS GENDER.
...A CRIME FICTION NOVEL WITH A FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE.
CON-SIDER ...
ER.. MALE?
WHAT IS THE CULPRIT'S GENDER?
IN THIS STORY, A LOT OF WOMEN ARE RAPED.
SO, WHAT IS THE NARRATOR'S GENDER?
WELL, I'D SAY THE NARRATOR IS A WOMAN, RIGHT?
IT'S BECAUSE THE NARRATOR IS A LONG-HAIRED BISEXUAL!
HUH? HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE ?
HOWEVER, IT TURNS OUT THE CULPRIT IS THE NARRATOR HIMSELF!
THAT'S IT. THE READER IS NATURALLY CONVINCED THAT THE CULPRIT IS A MAN, AND THAT THE NARRATOR AND THE CULPRIT ARE TWO DISTINCT CHARACTERS.

WHO GOT TRICKED IN THIS CASE?
SAME QUESTION AS LAST TIME...
HA! HA! HA!
BUT... BUT YOU'RE CHEATING! THIS WAS A TRICK QUESTION!
THAT'S IT!
ER... M... ME?!
THE GOAL IS TO DECEIVE THE READER BY USING HIS PRECONCEIVED IDEAS, HIS CONVICTIONS AND THE BLIND SPOTS OF HIS REASONING AGAINST HIM!
IN A STORY THAT RELIES ON NARRATIVE MANIPULATION, THE CHARACTERS ARE NOT THE ONES WHO GET TRICKED, IT'S THE READER!
THE CONCEPT OF NARRATIVE MANIPULATION IS OLD, AGATHA CHRISTIE ONCE USED IT IN THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD.
OR BY MAKING THE STORY TAKE PLACE IN TWO DIFFERENT AREAS THAT ARE BOTH CALLED OOHARA, ONE OF THEM IN SETAGAYA, THE OTHER IN SAITAMA AND IMPLYING THAT IT'S THE SAME PLACE.
FOR EXAMPLE, BY GIVING THE SAME NAME TO TWO CHARACTERS AND KEEPING IT A SECRET UNTIL THE END.
THIS CAN BE DONE IN MANY DIFFER-ENT WAYS...

CINEMA IS BASED ON VISUAL REPRESENTATION BUT IT ALSO RESORTS TO MANIPULATIVE DEVICES.
NO, I THINK THERE'S POTENTIAL.
IT SEEMS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE THE SAME THING IN A MANGA.
BUT THIS TYPE OF DEVICE WORKS IN A NOVEL BECAUSE THERE ARE NO PICTURES, RIGHT?
...BUT IT'S ACTUALLY A FILM SHOOT.
HERE, YOU'D THINK THIS IS A SAMURAI FIGHT...
I AGREE, BUT IT IS STILL MANIPULATION.
THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CRIME FICTION!
STARTING FROM THERE, WE COULD WRITE A MYSTERY STORY.
NO, ACTUALLY, THEY'RE TWINS.
SPLIT PERSONALITY?
...WHO TRANSFORMS INTO A BLOODTHIRSTY MONSTER AT NIGHT.
HERE IS A KIND YOUNG MAN...

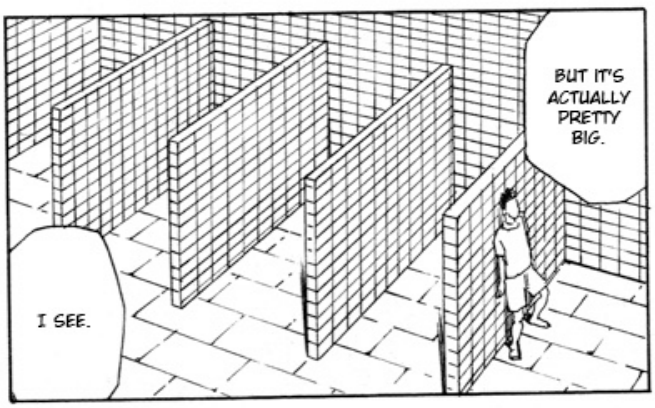
WE CAN ALSO COME UP WITH PLOYS THAT WILL CONFUSE THE READER.
...
OPEN THIS DOOR!
HEY!
NOISE CAN BE HEARD FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR. IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S SOMEONE THERE.
WHAT? BUT...
WRONG! HE'S NOT LOCKED UP AT ALL!
HUM... HE'S LOCKED UP IN A CELL, RIGHT?
NOW, TELL ME ABOUT THIS CHARACTER'S SITUATION.
OPEN UP, FOR FUCK'S SAKE!
SHIT! ARE YOU GONNA KEEP ME LIKE THIS FOREVER?

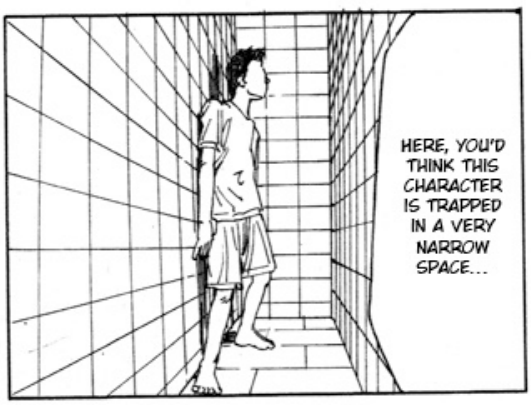

HERE'S THE RIGHT ANSWER!

I BLURRED YOUR NOTION OF WHAT'S INSIDE AND WHAT'S OUTSIDE.
LET ME REMIND YOU THAT THE FIRST CHARACTER NEVER ASKED TO BE LET OUT.
IT MEANS THAT THE CHARACTER YOU THOUGHT WAS LOCKED UP INSIDE IS ACTUALLY OUTSIDE, AND THE CHARACTER YOU THOUGHT WAS OUTSIDE IS INSIDE.

...BUT WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

REALLY? HOW?
THIS TRICK CAN ALSO BE APPLIED TO THE PERCEPTION OF DEPTH AND DISTANCE!


BUT IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY BIG.
I SEE.


HERE, YOU'D THINK THIS CHARACTER IS TRAPPED IN A VERY NARROW SPACE...

THE SLICING DEVIL

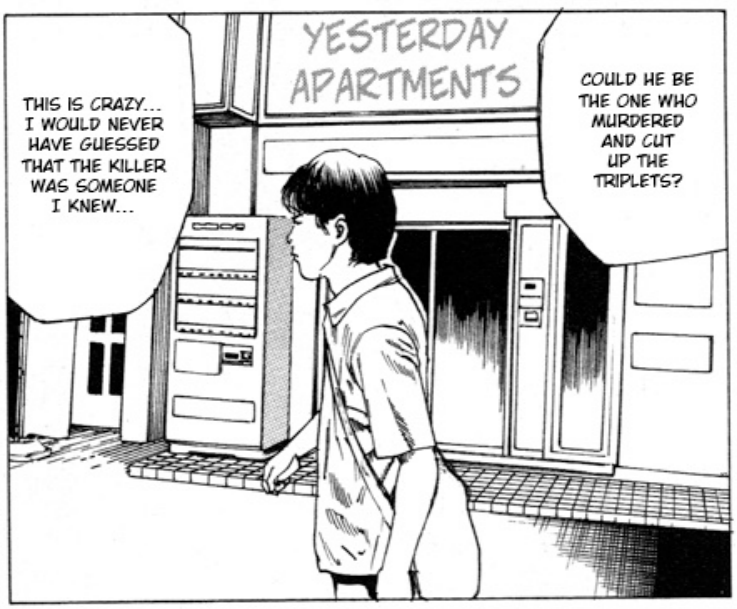
3

SHIT!
WHO ...
WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS ...

COULD IT BE HAYAMI ?!

KILL RYOKO WHILE I WAS SLEEPING ...

BUT IF I REPORT HER DEATH, I WILL INEVITABLY BECOME A SUSPECT.
THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT RYOKO'S MURDER ON THE NEWS... IT COULD BE THAT THEY HAVEN'T FOUND HER BODY YET...

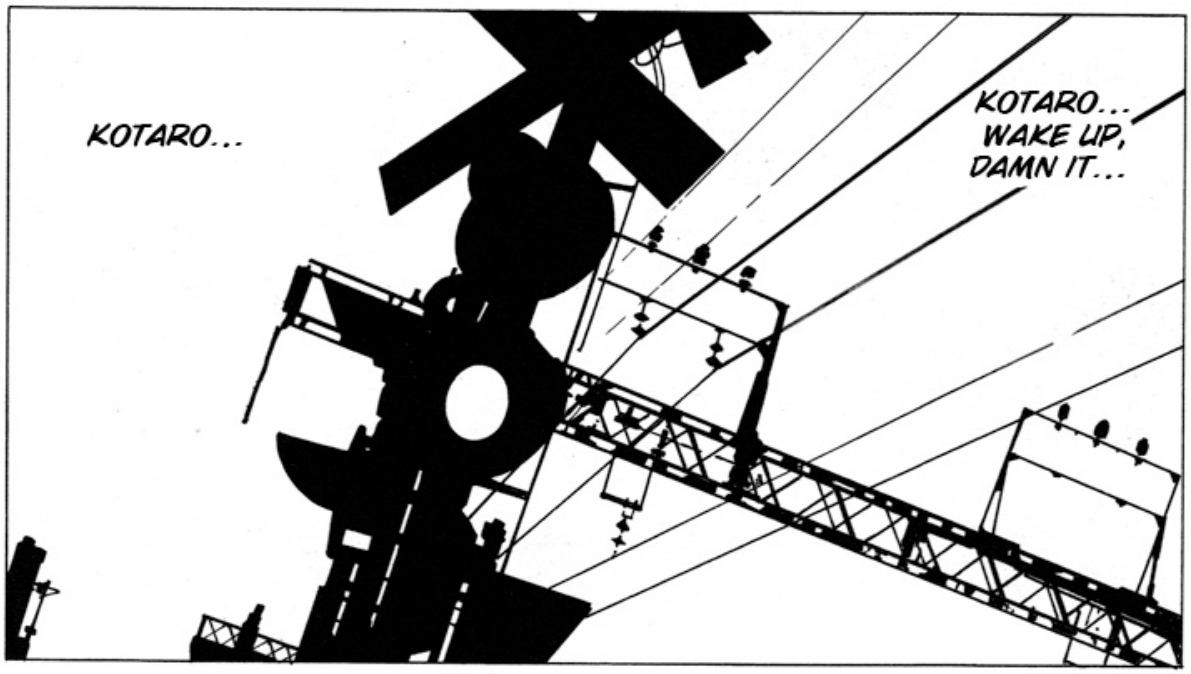

YESTERDAY APARTMENTS
THIS IS CRAZY... I WOULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT THE KILLER WAS SOMEONE I KNEW...
COULD HE BE THE ONE WHO MURDERED AND CUT UP THE TRIPLETS?

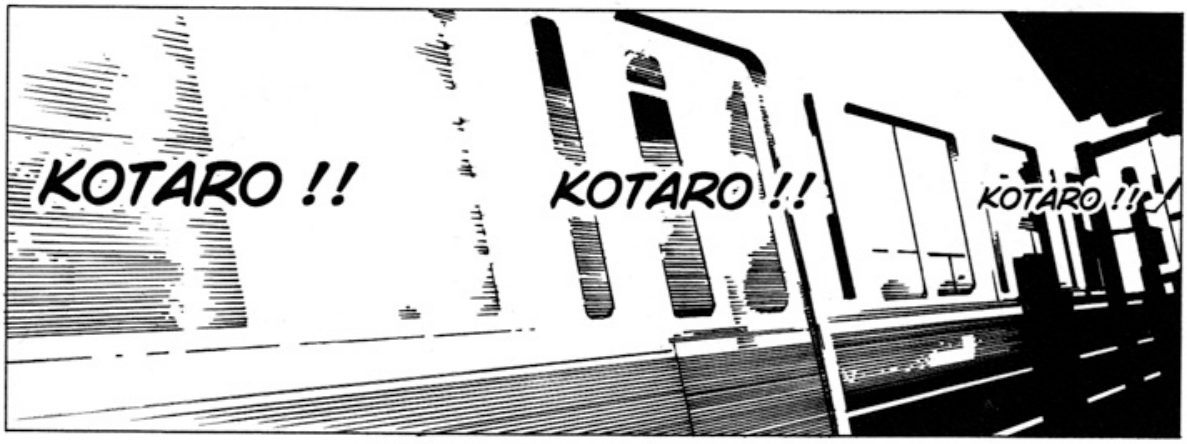
AH, RIGHT, TODAY'S HER DAY OFF.
NOBODY FINDS IT ODD THAT RYOKO'S NOT AT WORK TODAY?
GOOD MORNING!
HI!
GOOD MORNING!
IT'S ABOUT RYOKO ...
I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING, TONIGHT, AFTER WORK.
MISTER HAYAMI!
AND WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME THIS?
WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT?
SO, WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?
BAR 海仏壇
YOU WANT TO ROB ME OR SOME-THING?
WELL, I'M LISTENING...?
Saturday, August 15, 9:00 PM

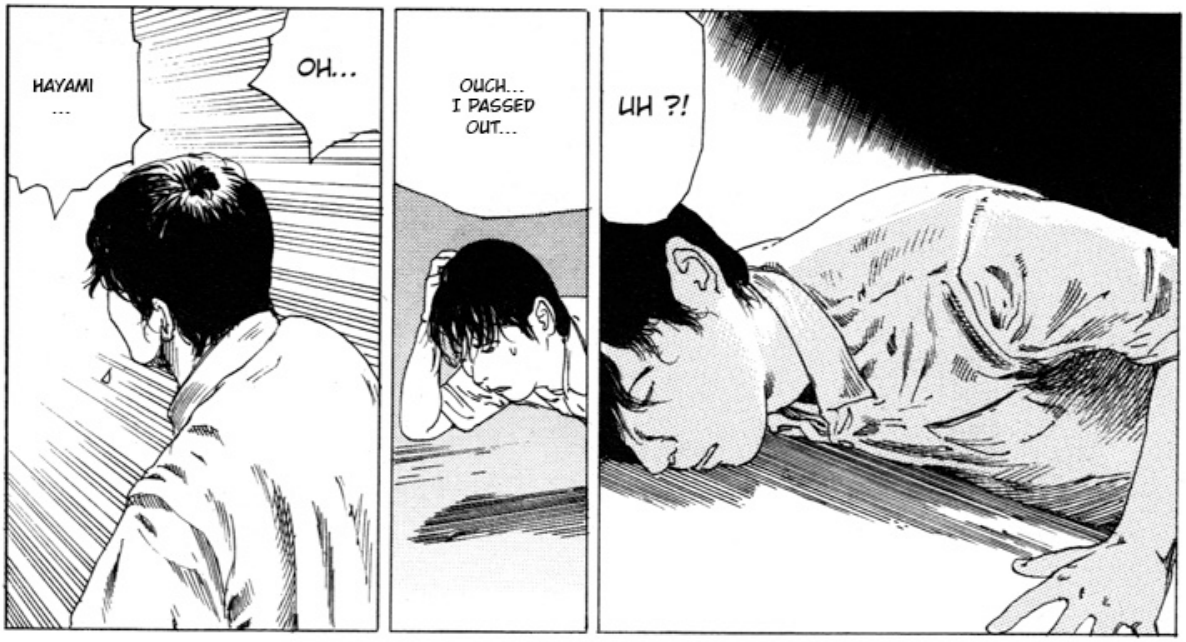
HMNGH ?!
YOU'RE TRULY PATHETIC.
OPEN IT!
OPEN YOUR MOUTH!
HNGHHN
...DUMB WITH ME!
BAM
DON'T PLAY ...
C...CUT IN HALF ?!
WAS IT YOU WHO CUT RYOKO IN HALF LAST NIGHT?
WHAT ARE YOU...
GUND
PLOC
ZIP

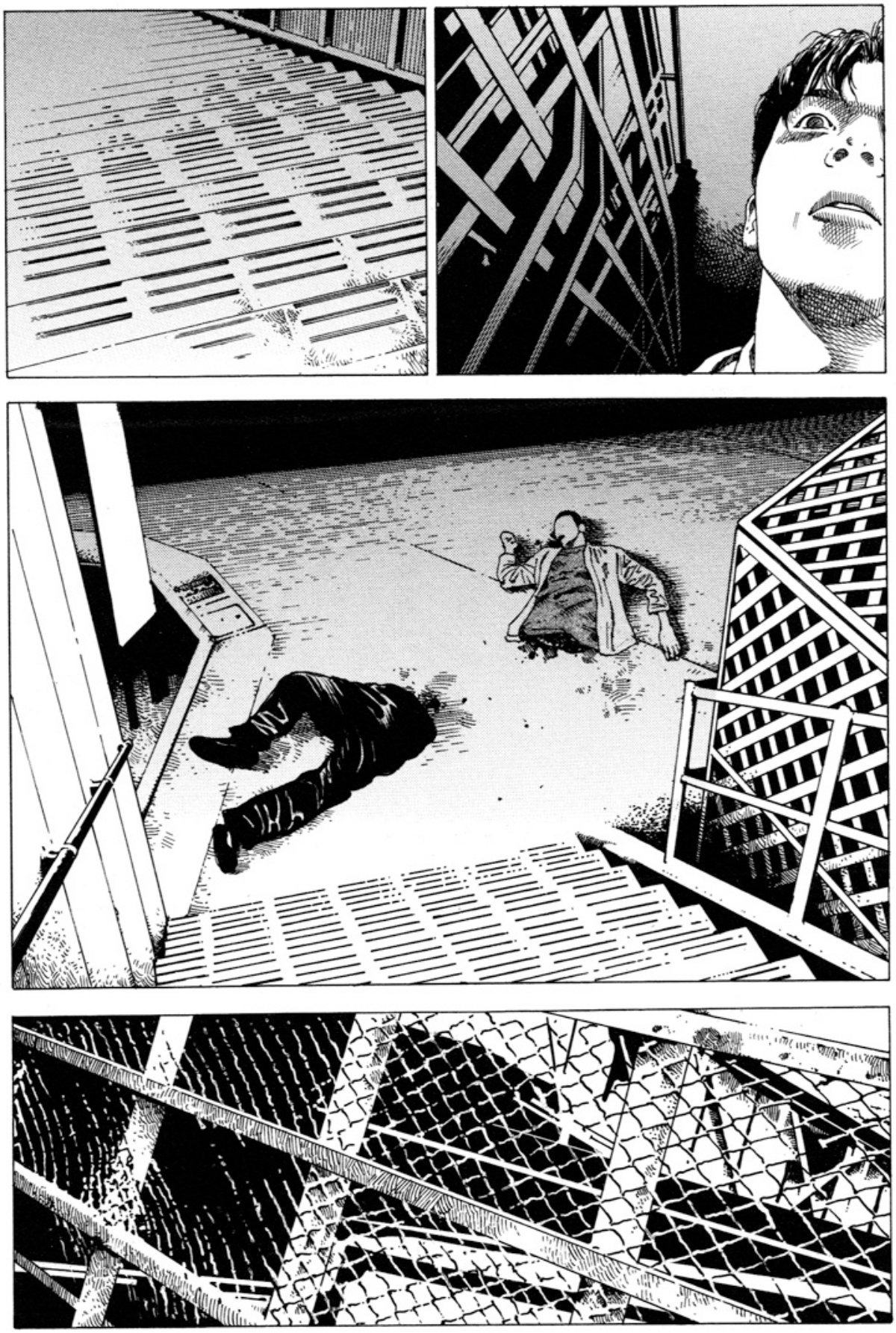
THE ONLY VALID ANSWER IS "YES"!
YOU KILLED RYOKO, DIDN'T YOU?
NO NEED TO TALK, JUST MOVE YOUR HEAD TO SAY YES OR NO.
...
YOU'RE THE SLICING DEVIL'S COPYCAT, AREN'T YOU?
?!
YOU KILLED RYOKO AND YOU CUT HER IN HALF, AM I RIGHT?
OK, I'LL ASK YOU ANOTHER QUESTION.
!!
COME ON, NOD YOUR HEAD!
IT'S YOU, RIGHT?! I'M SURE OF IT!

BOM
HAH!
PAM
YOU'LL SEE...
PAF
UUUH...
OUH H


KOTARO...
KOTARO... WAKE UP, DAMN IT...

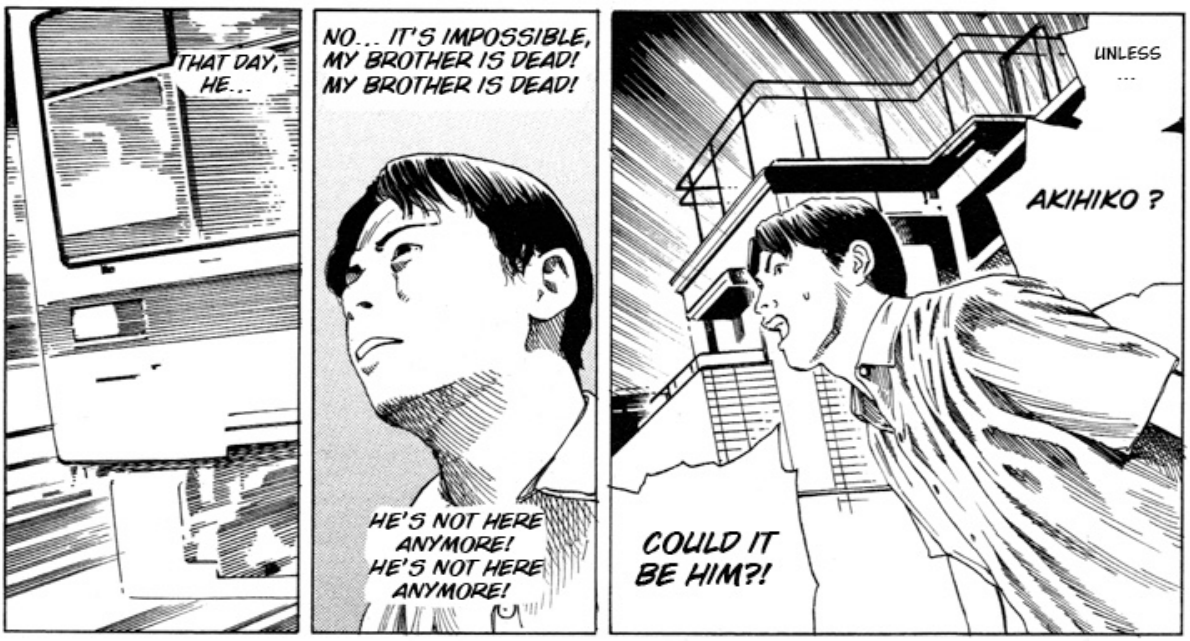

KOTARO !!
KOTARO !!
KOTARO !!


HAYAMI ...
OH...
OUCH... I PASSED OUT...
UH ?!

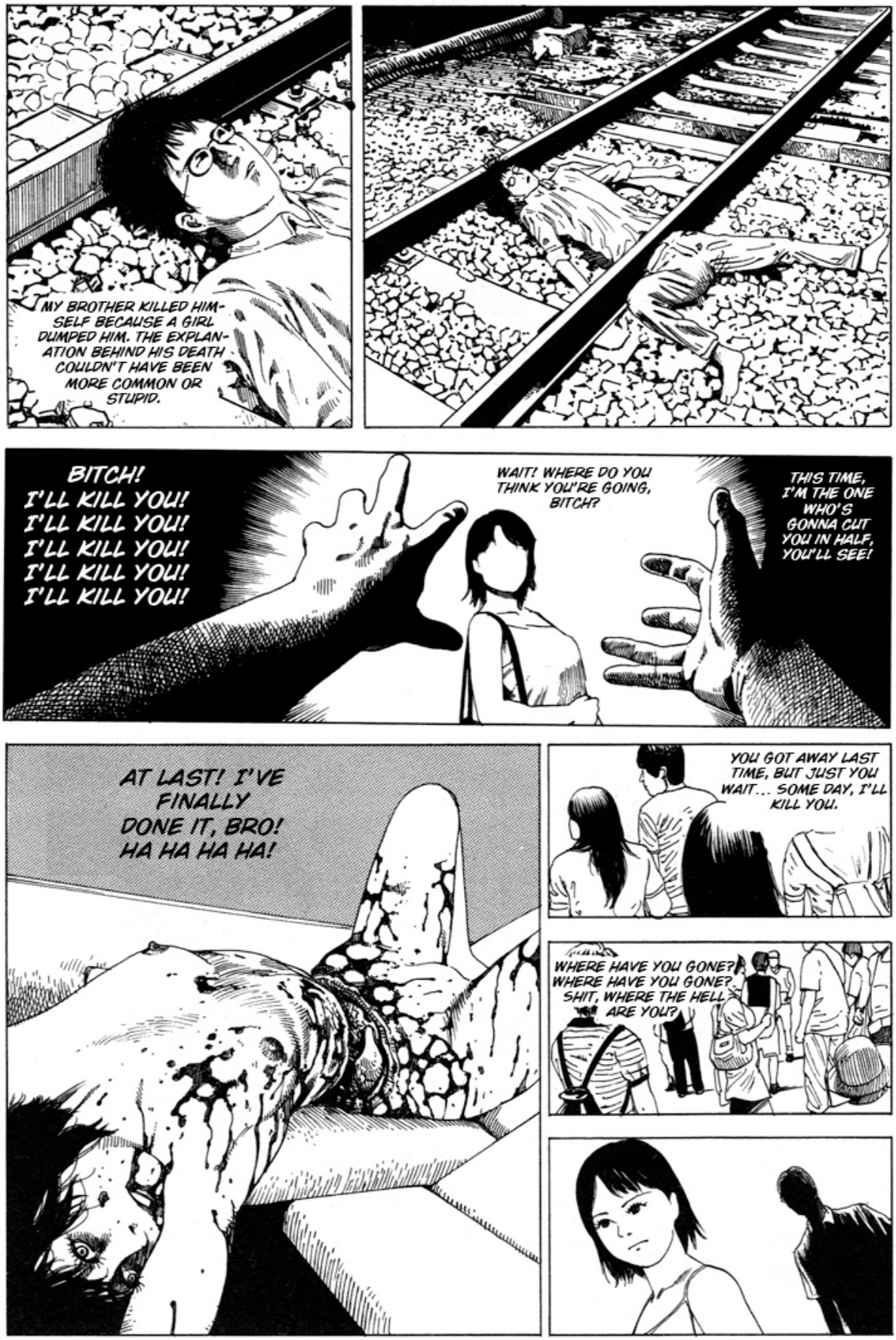


WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS? WHAT THE HELL IS THIS? WHAT THE HELL IS THIS? WHAT THE HELL IS THIS? WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

IT MAKES NO SENSE AT ALL...
HAYAMI WASN'T THE KILLER? SO THERE'S ANOTHER SLICING DEVIL?!


THAT DAY, HE...
NO... IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, MY BROTHER IS DEAD! MY BROTHER IS DEAD!
HE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE! HE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE!
UNLESS ...
AKIHIKO ?
COULD IT BE HIM?!

IS IT YOU WHO'S WATCHING OVER ME?!
ARE YOU HERE, BRO?! ARE YOU?
IF YOU'RE HERE, SHOW YOURSELF!!
IS... IS MY MEMORY PLAYING TRICKS ON ME?
HOWEVER, SOMEONE DID CUT HAYAMI IN HALF... BUT WHO?
NO, OF COURSE HE'S NOT HERE... I'M IMAGINING THINGS...
DID I REALLY DO IT?
WHY DID I EVEN START CUTTING THESE GIRLS IN HALF ANYWAY?
BROTHER...
BROTHER...
BROTHER...
BROTHER...


MY BROTHER KILLED HIMSELF BECAUSE A GIRL DUMPED HIM. THE EXPLANATION BEHIND HIS DEATH COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE COMMON OR STUPID.
BITCH! I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL KILL YOU!
WAIT! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, BITCH?
THIS TIME, I'M THE ONE WHO'S GONNA CUT YOU IN HALF, YOU'LL SEE!
AT LAST! I'VE FINALLY DONE IT, BRO! HA HA HA HA!
YOU GOT AWAY LAST TIME, BUT JUST YOU WAIT... SOME DAY, I'LL KILL YOU.
WHERE HAVE YOU GONE? WHERE HAVE YOU GONE? SHIT, WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

STILL NOT HER!
CRAP! THIS ISN'T HER EITHER!
SHIT! SHIT! YOU FUCKING WHORES!
NOOO! THIS ISN'T HER! SHE LOOKS LIKE HER BUT THIS ISN'T HER! DAMN, I'VE BEEN CHEATED!
AAH... BROTHER...
TAKAHASHI Matsuo
HIGASHINO Akihiko
I'M SO SORRY FOR NOT BEING STRONG ENOUGH,,,
WHENEVER I WANT TO SEE MY BROTHER, I OPEN UP THIS BOOK. IN HERE, HE'S STILL ALIVE.
Kanio High School Graduation Yearbook 2002
...BUT ?!
HE WENT TO MY BROTHER'S HIGH SCHOOL? I'VE NEVER NOTICED THIS BEFORE...
IS IT JUST A COINCI-DENCE?
IS THIS THE SAME HAYAMI?!
Kanio High School Graduation Yearbook 2002
HAYAMI Ryo
HAYAMI ?!
HIGASHINO Ak

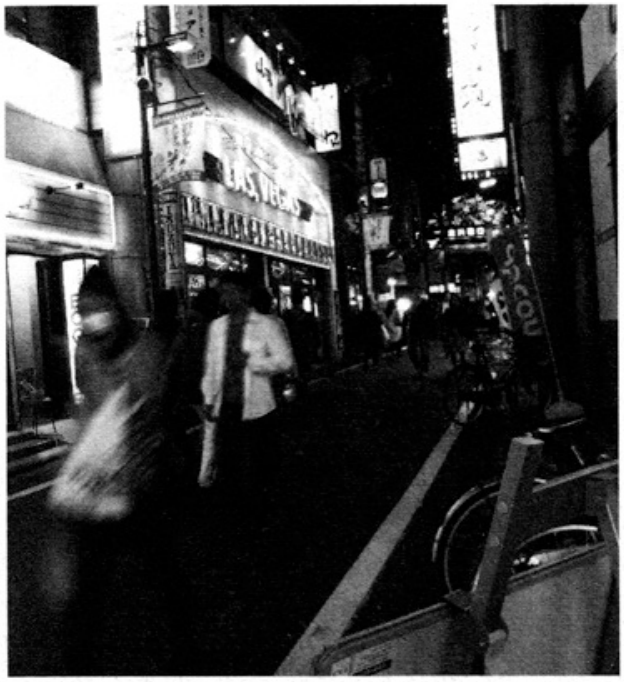
THIS CANNOT BE A COINCI-DENCE!
RYOKO, HAYAMI AND MY BROTHER ALL WENT TO THE SAME SCHOOL ?
R... RYOKO ?
FUJIOKA Ryoko
Monday, August 16, 2:00 PM
庄や
COME TO THINK OF IT, DID THE POLICE FIND HER BODY?
IM-POS-SIB-LE!
RYOKO ?!

ピンポーン
ding dong
NOBODY'S ANSWERING OF COURSE...
THEY DIDN'T LOCK DOWN THE AREA...
AH... S... SORRY!!!
KOTARO! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO PUNCH IN AT 2 PM TODAY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? IT'S ALREADY 3 PM!
!!
WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU DOING?
SORRY FOR BEING LATE!
TODAY IS AUGUST 16TH, YES, THAT'S RIGHT...
BUT...
NO. 36
NAME: RYO HAYAMI
HUH?
TIME CARD
AUGUST 2009
Date
CAME
WENT
16 9 00 13 01
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
HE... HE WAS HERE TODAY?
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT?
HE WORKED HERE THIS MORNING. HE ALREADY WENT BACK HOME.
ER... IS HAYAMI...
WHA... WHAT DOES THIS EVEN MEAN?!
IT MAKES NO SENSE...
TWO ICED COFFEES, PLEASE.
HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING ?!
HMM... TWO ICED COFFEES...
HUH?!
SORRY, I HAVE TO GO!
THERE. I'LL HAVE ICED CHOCOLATE MILK INSTEAD.
I'LL HAVE A CREAM TEA.. UH... NO, WAIT...
HMM... I'M NOT SURE...
HOW 'BOUT YOU, WHAT WILL YOU HAVE?
AH, GEEZ, I DON'T KNOW YET!
AH, NO, WAIT!
HEY, WAIT A SEC! I'VE STILL NOT ORDERED ANYTHING ...
MAYBE SOME FRUIT JUICE ...
OR ...
I'LL CHOOSE THIS INSTEAD.
A CUP OF ICED COFFEE, PLEASE.
I'LL JUST HAVE ICED COFFEE.
OH, THEY HAVE VIETNAMESE COFFEE!

I'M THE ONE WHO DID IT! DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
HURRY UP, DAMN IT!!
I'M NOT JOKING! SHE'S BEEN CUT IN HALF!
YES! LORIMA RESIDENCE! ROOM 201! YOU'LL FIND THE CORPSE OF A WOMAN!
CLAC
ARE YOU IN THERE, MISS FUJIOKA?
AH, FUCK... IT'S SO HOT TODAY, I COULD REALLY DO WITHOUT THIS CRAP.

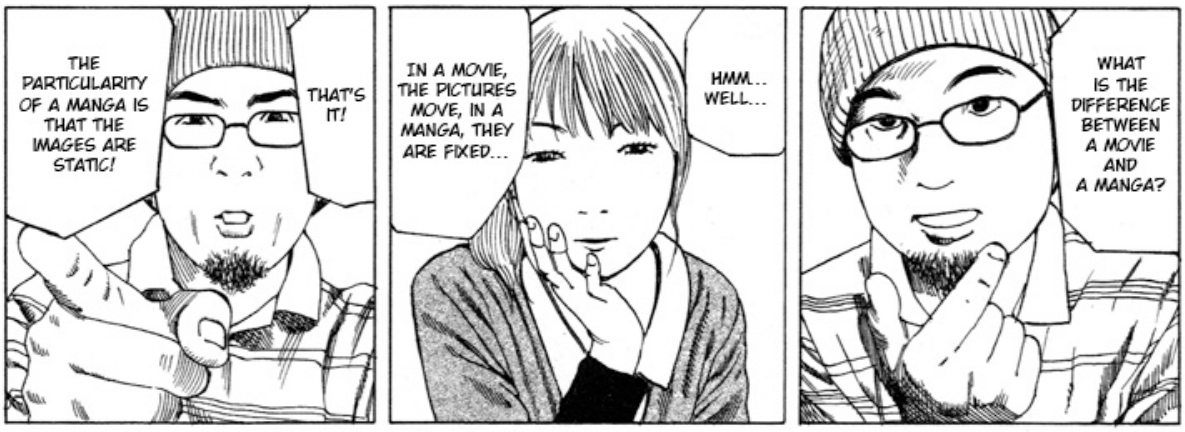
RYOKO IS ALIVE!
YOU... DON'T EVER COME NEAR HER AGAIN!



THE MANGA ARTIST

3

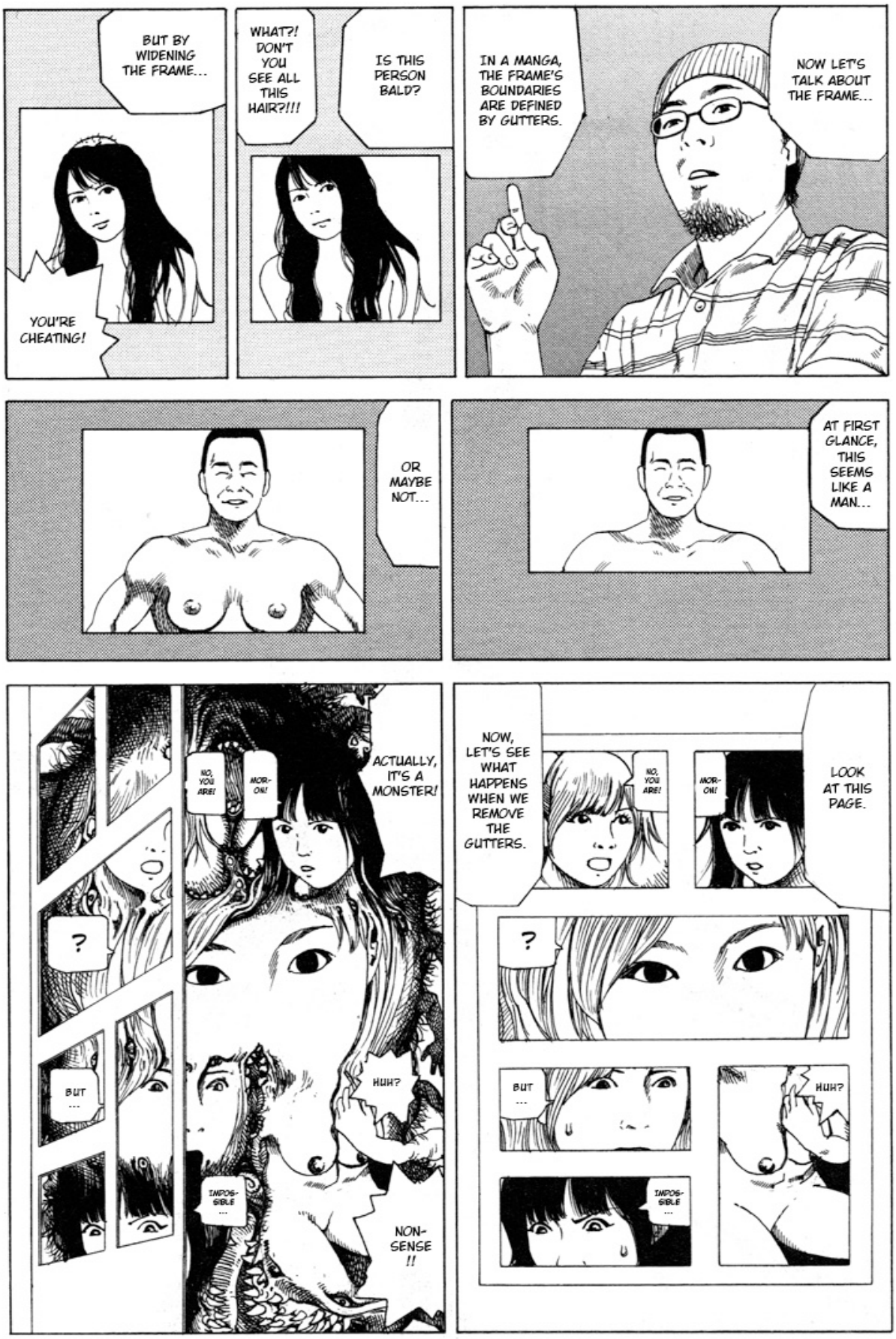
I'LL SAY IT AGAIN, THE ONLY WAY NARRATIVE MANIPULATION CAN WORK IN A MANGA IS BY MAKING USE OF DEVICES THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO COMICS.


THE PARTICULARITY OF A MANGA IS THAT THE IMAGES ARE STATIC!
THAT'S IT!
IN A MOVIE, THE PICTURES MOVE, IN A MANGA, THEY ARE FIXED...
HMM... WELL...
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MOVIE AND A MANGA?

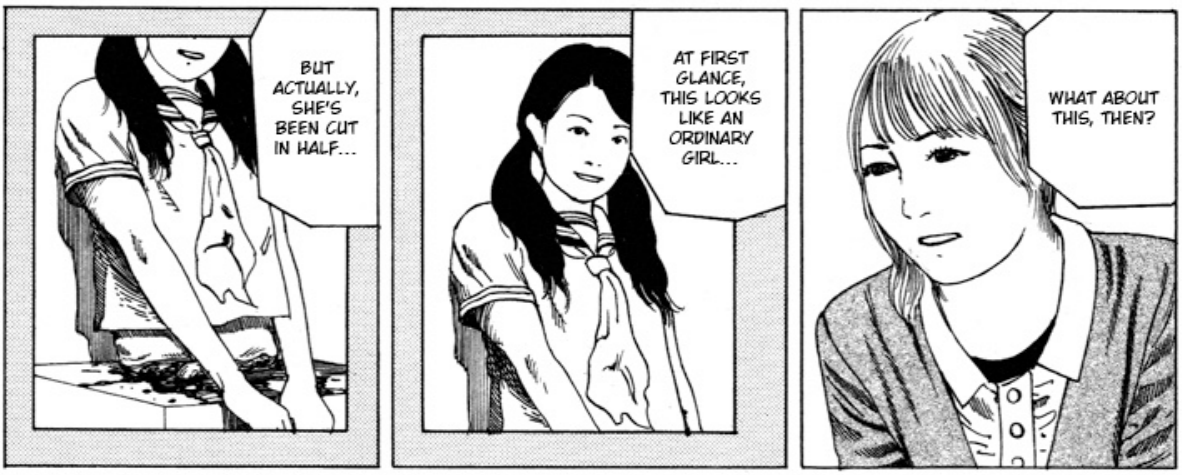
THE READER, BASED ON THE CHARACTER'S POSTURE AND THE MOTION LINES, IS TRICKED INTO THINKING THAT THIS ATHLETE IS RUNNING.
22
LET'S USE THIS PANEL AS AN EXAMPLE.

MAYBE IT'S JUST SOME WEIRDO DRESSED LIKE A DISTANCE RUNNER AND STRIKING A POSE.
22
YES, HE'S TRICKED, BECAUSE...
TRICK-ED?

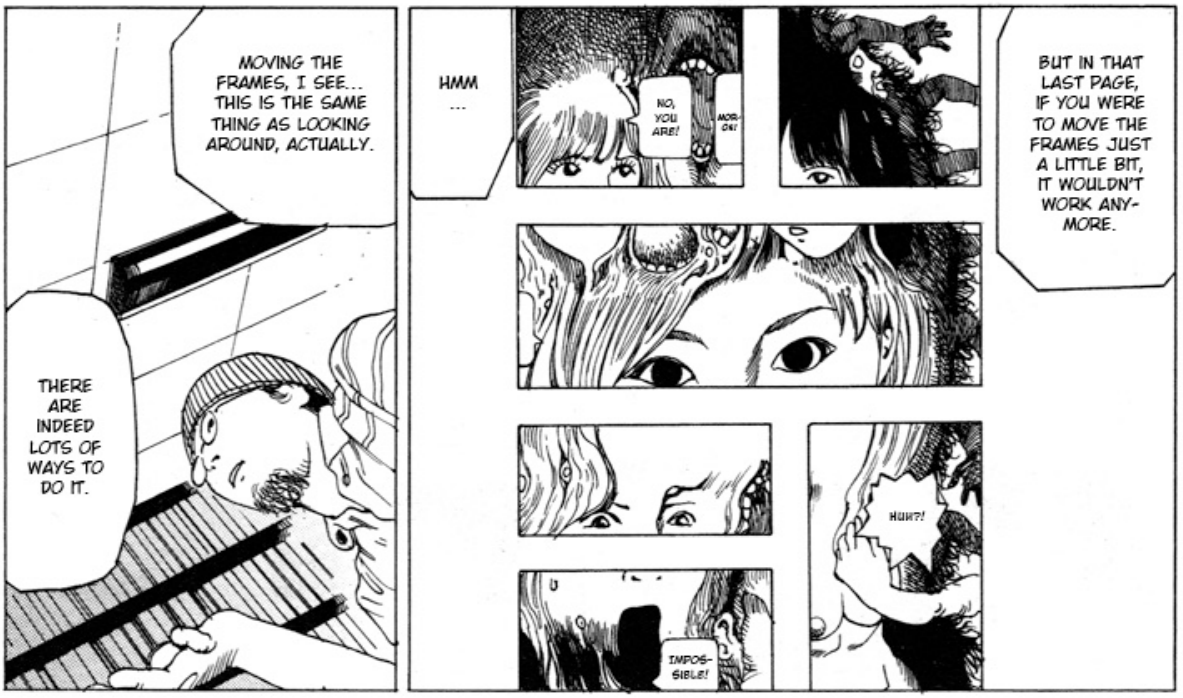
1. SEVERAL PEOPLE RUN AT THE SAME TIME.
2. A RUNNER OUTRUNS THE OTHERS.
3. SHE FINISHES THE RACE, TAKING FIRST PLACE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU'D THINK, AT FIRST GLANCE.
LET'S OBSERVE THIS SEQUENCE OF PANELS.
BUT IN A MANGA, IT TAKES MORE THAN ONE IMAGE TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION... IT'S ONLY BY READING PANELS FOLLOWING ONE ANOTHER THAT THE READER IS ABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT A CHARACTER IS RUNNING, RIGHT?
HERE LIES THE BLIND SPOT!
1. ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE RUNNING AT THE SAME TIME.
2. ONE OF THE RUNNERS CAN'T KEEP UP.
3. SHE FINISHES LAST.
IT ISN'T WHAT'S HAPPENING?
ER... SHE'S ALIVE, RIGHT?
IS THIS PERSON ALIVE OR DEAD?
HERE'S ANOTHER EXAMPLE.
SINCE THE PANELS IN A MANGA ARE STATIC, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH THE LIVING FROM THE DEAD.
WRONG! IT'S A CORPSE!

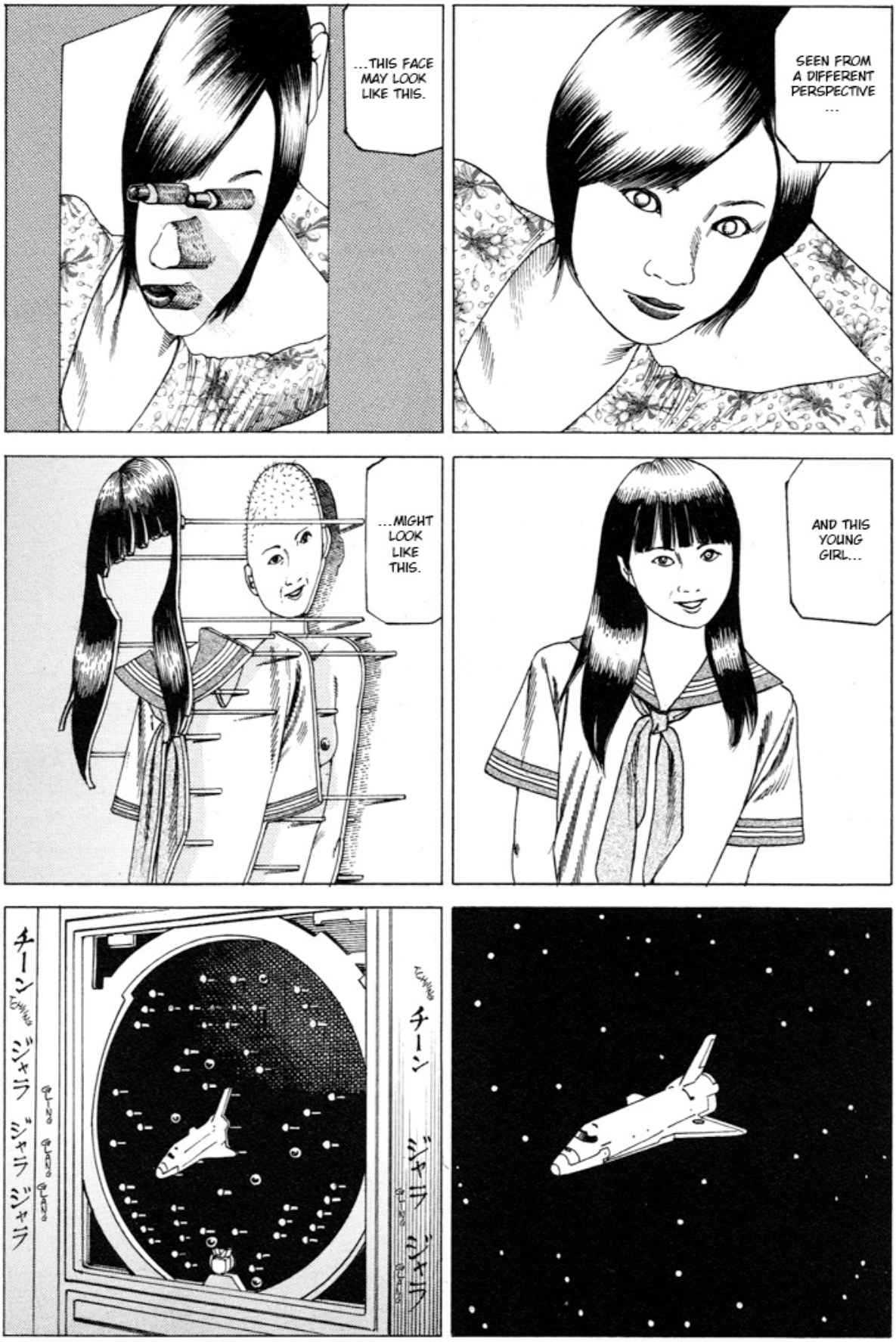

BUT BY WIDENING THE FRAME...
YOU'RE CHEATING!
WHAT?! DON'T YOU SEE ALL THIS HAIR?!!!
IS THIS PERSON BALD?
IN A MANGA, THE FRAME'S BOUNDARIES ARE DEFINED BY GUTTERS.
NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FRAME...
OR MAYBE NOT...
AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS SEEMS LIKE A MAN...
NO, YOU ARE!
MOR-ON!
ACTUALLY, IT'S A MONSTER!
?
BUT ...
HUH?
IMPOS-SIBLE ...
NON-SENSE !!
NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE REMOVE THE GUTTERS.
LOOK AT THIS PAGE.

IN OTHER WORDS, TO TRICK THE READER, IT'S AS SIMPLE AS SETTING WHAT YOU WANT TO HIDE OUTSIDE THE FRAME.
UNLESS YOU "DECONSTRUCT" THE PAGE, THE READER CAN'T SEE WHAT LIES BEYOND THE GUTTERS.


BUT ACTUALLY, SHE'S BEEN CUT IN HALF...
AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS LOOKS LIKE AN ORDINARY GIRL...
WHAT ABOUT THIS, THEN?

RIGHT?
THIS BRINGS US BACK TO THE SLICING DEVIL'S MURDERS!
CLEVER!


MOVING THE FRAMES, I SEE... THIS IS THE SAME THING AS LOOKING AROUND, ACTUALLY.
THERE ARE INDEED LOTS OF WAYS TO DO IT.
HMM ...
NO, YOU ARE!
MOR-ON!
BUT IN THAT LAST PAGE, IF YOU WERE TO MOVE THE FRAMES JUST A LITTLE BIT, IT WOULDN'T WORK ANY-MORE.
HUH?!
IMPOS-SIBLE!


...THIS FACE MAY LOOK LIKE THIS.
SEEN FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ...
...MIGHT LOOK LIKE THIS.
AND THIS YOUNG GIRL...
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HMM... THE WOMAN, RIGHT?
I'D LIKE TO HAVE KIDS...
IN THIS SCENE, WHICH CHARACTER IS TALKING?
SPEECH BUBBLES ?
LET'S TALK ABOUT SPEECH BUBBLES.
WE COULD DO THIS FOR HOURS... LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE KIDS...
NOPE! IT'S AN OLD WOMAN WHO'S HIDING BEHIND THE WOMAN!
HUH?
BUT I'D BET THE MAN IS A LESBIAN TRANVESTITE! SO HE'S THE ONE WHO'S TALKING!
YOU'D THINK THAT THE WOMAN IS SPEAKING ...
NO, WAIT! THIS LOOKS LIKE A TRAP!
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, I NEVER USE THESE EXPRESSIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE...
I SEE... THAT'S WHY DIALOGUE OFTEN CONTAINS TYPICALLY FEMININE OR MASCULINE EXPRESSIONS. IT HELPS THE READER IDENTIFY THE SPEAKER...
SINCE THE SPEECH BUBBLES IN MANGAS ARE DEVOID OF SOUND, IN MOST CASES, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHO'S TALKING.
YOUR PUSSY STINKS.
WRONG! THIS TEXT WAS WRITTEN ON THE FLOOR!
OK, THAT'S ENOUGH.
SO, WHO'S TALKING IN THIS PANEL?
YOUR PUSSY STINKS.
YOU CAN ALSO COME UP WITH THIS KIND OF TRICK ...
I DON'T KNOW... A DOG, PERHAPS ?
...

ABOUT YOUR IDEA FOR A COLUMN.
ENOUGH TALK FOR TODAY... I'LL GIVE YOU MY ANSWER...
AH, SO THIS IS A YES, THEN?
ALRIGHT ...
OF COURSE! I WOULDN'T TURN DOWN A JOB! BUT I'D LIKE TO USE NARRATIVE MANIPULATION DEVICES.
THERE ARE ACTUALLY TWO KILLERS!
REGARDING THE KILLER'S PROFILE, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS...
THEY DO NOT OPERATE TOGETHER, THOUGH.
HOW-EVER ...
THE FIRST FIVE MURDERS, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN SANGENJAYA, DAITA, HIGASHI-KITAZAWA, SHIMOUMA AND IKEJIRI, ARE THE WORK OF THE FIRST KILLER.

THERE'S NO NEED TO PROVE ANYTHING, IT'S THE TRUTH!
BUT... ON WHAT BASIS ARE YOU AFFIRMING SUCH A THING?!
THE LAST THREE MURDERS, WHICH HAPPENED IN HANEGI, OOHARA AND TOKOROZAWA, WERE CARRIED OUT BY ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL.
WHAT ?!!!
BECAUSE THE ONE WHO COMMITTED THE LAST THREE MURDERS... IS NONE OTHER THAN ME!
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
AND THE VICTIM... IS YOU!

HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
AND THE VICTIM.. IS YOU!

MODEL NUMBER 3: EMI TAMA, 25 YEARS OLD.
MODEL NUMBER 2: JUNKO KAZAMI, 25 YEARS OLD.
MODEL NUMBER 1: TAKEKO YUKI, 25 YEARS OLD.
▶REPLAY
AAAH, I SEE... I USED TO WATCH TUESDAY'S THRILLERS ON TELEVISION. THE "HOT TUB MURDERS" SERIES REALLY WAS SOMETHING! THERE ALWAYS WERE SOME GIRLS WITH THEIR BREASTS EXPOSED!
I'LL RESORT TO NARRATIVE MANIPULATION!
IT'S VERY SIMPLE ...
WHAT WILL YOU DO, THEN?
HMMM... THESE SERIES ARE INDEED BASED ON MYSTERIES, BUT...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? INVESTIGATIONS LIKE IN CASE CLOSED OR KINDAICHI CASE FILES?

...
REPLAY
KAGO WITHOUT ERO GURO? BUT THAT WOULD BE... OF NO INTEREST AT ALL!
Sunday, August 2, 3:00 PM
Shintaro Kago's workshop
IN THAT CASE, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT TO WRITE?
SORRY, THAT DIDN'T COME OUT RIGHT...
MYSTERY STORIES!
TCHUC

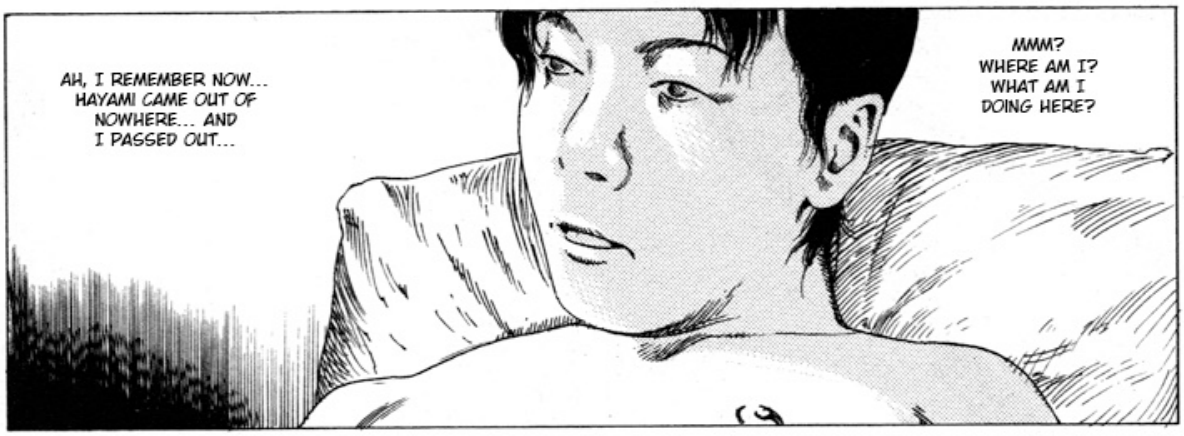
THEY'RE WHODUNIT MYSTERIES, IN OTHER WORDS, "WHO'S THE KILLER?"...
...THEY'RE ALSO HOWDUNIT MYSTERIES, OR TO PUT IT DIFFERENTLY, "HOW DID THE KILLER PROCEED?"
HMMM... THESE SERIES ARE INDEED BASED ON MYSTERIES, BUT...
MYSTERY STORIES?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
INVESTIGATIONS LIKE IN CASE CLOSED OR KINDAICHI CASE FILES?
Monday, August 3, 8:00 AM
Shintaro Kago's workshop

THESE TWO TYPES OF MYSTERIES FORM THE CORE OF CRIME FICTION BUT I FAIL TO SEE WHAT'D BE INTERESTING ABOUT WRITING THESE KINDS OF STORIES TODAY.
WHAT WILL YOU DO, THEN?

HE'S CONSULTING THE ADDRESS BOOK FROM THE EDITOR'S CELL PHONE

THE SLICING DEVIL

4

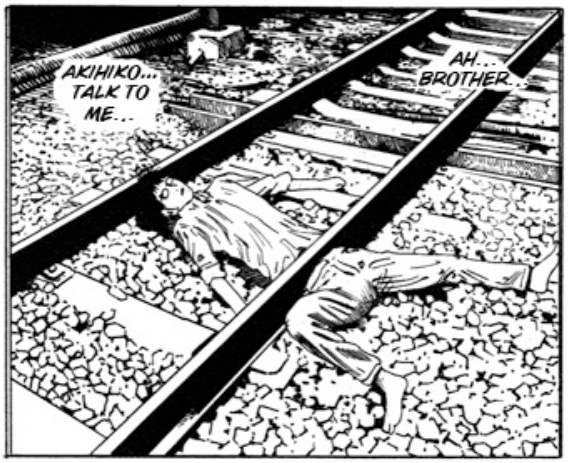

AH, I REMEMBER NOW... HAYAMI CAME OUT OF NOWHERE... AND I PASSED OUT...
MMM? WHERE AM I? WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

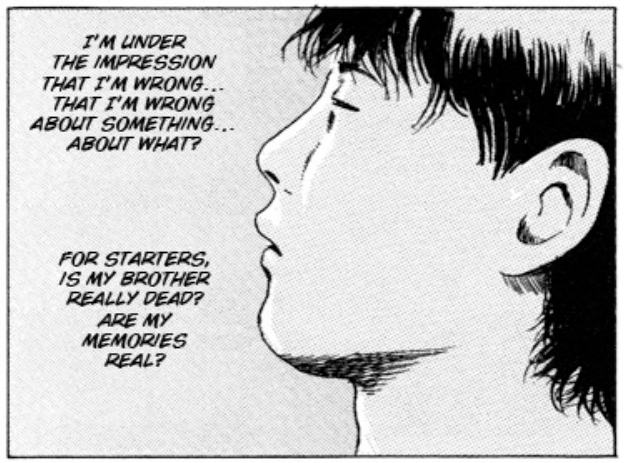
BUT... I'M HOME! DID I MANAGE TO COME BACK HERE BY MYSELF? ANYWAY, IT DOESN'T MATTER... HOW CAN RYOKO AND HAYAMI STILL BE ALIVE? THEY WERE CUT IN HALF...

BROTHER ...

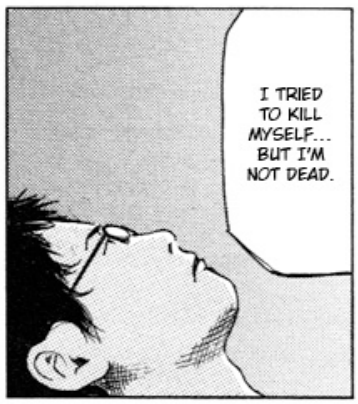
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, KOTARO!!

WAS IT ALL A DREAM? COULD THEIR DEATHS HAVE BEEN A FIGMENT OF MY IMAGINATION?


AKIHIKO... TALK TO ME...
AH... BROTHER...


I'M UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT I'M WRONG... THAT I'M WRONG ABOUT SOMETHING... ABOUT WHAT?
FOR STARTERS, IS MY BROTHER REALLY DEAD? ARE MY MEMORIES REAL?

YOU'RE STILL AS PATHETIC AS EVER, LITTLE BROTHER!
HA HA HA HA HA !!!


I TRIED TO KILL MYSELF... BUT I'M NOT DEAD.

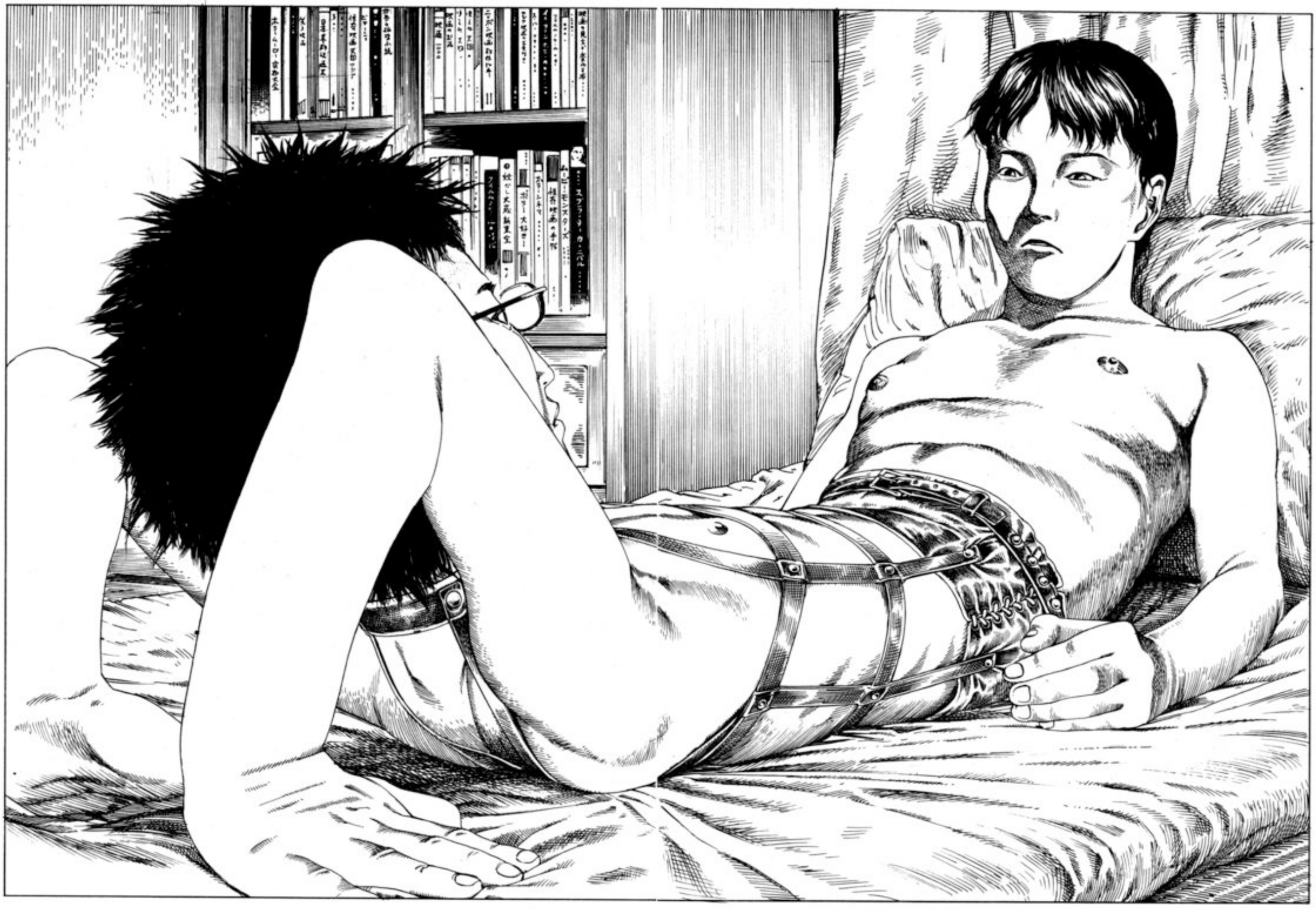
I'M ONLY HUMAN AFTER ALL.
TRUE, IT'S BEEN HARD FOR ME.

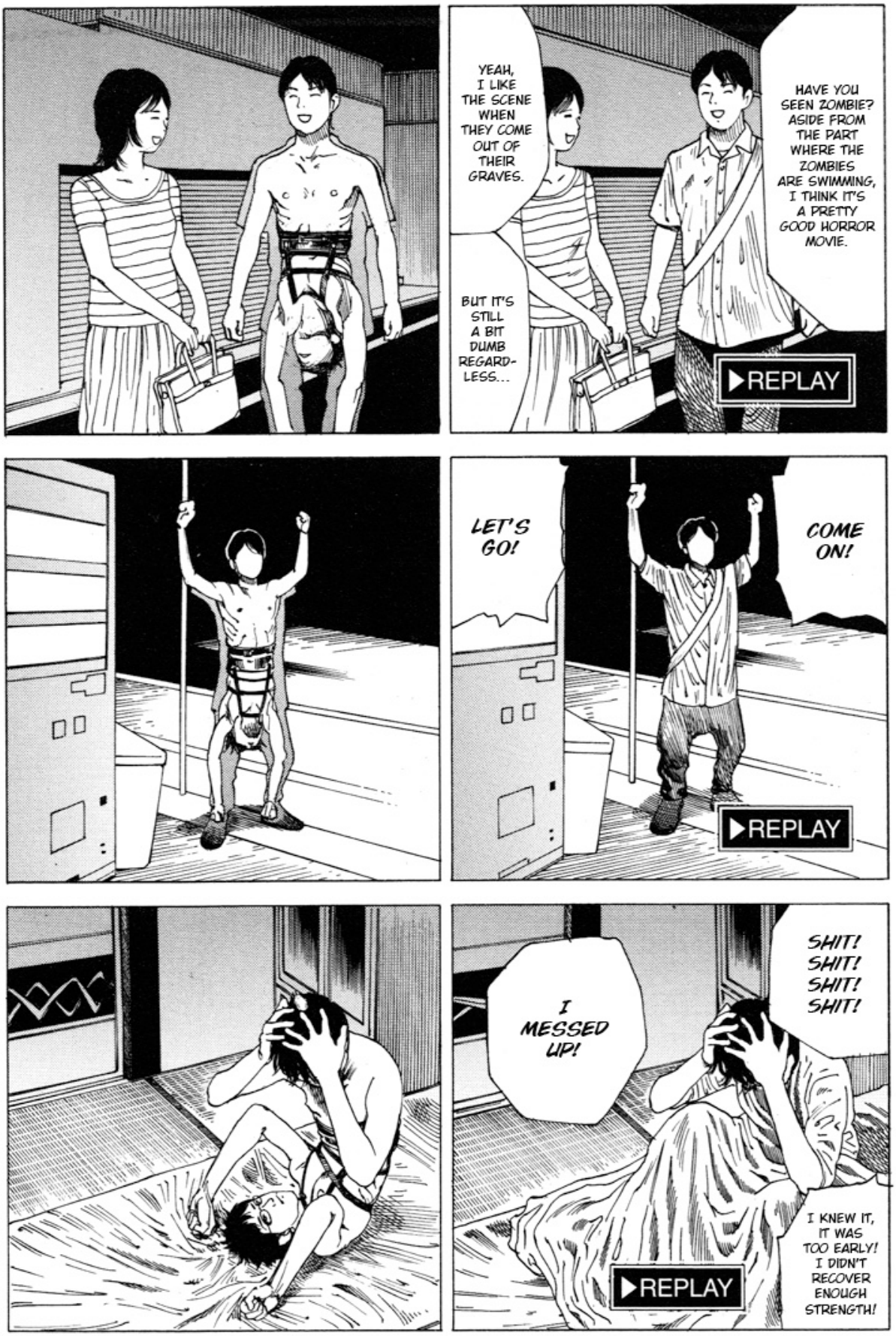
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT... YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KILLED HIMSELF AFTER BEING DUMPED, RIGHT?

THEN, YOU SHUT YOURSELF AWAY AND STARTED LIVING IN YOUR OWN WORLD.
THE THOUGHT OF MY SUICIDE WAS TOO MUCH FOR YOU AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO FIND OUT IF I WAS ALIVE OR NOT.

IT SURPRISED ME WHEN YOU CUT UP THIS GIRL TO AVENGE ME BUT IT COULDN'T BE HELPED. BESIDES, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO SUCH THINGS.
AFTER ALL, AN OLDER BROTHER SHOULD ALWAYS HELP OUT HIS YOUNGER SIBLING.
SINCE I'M PARTLY TO BLAME, I DECIDED TO WATCH OVER YOU.
NO, WHAT YOU'VE SEEN REALLY HAPPENED.
SO IT WAS A DREAM ...
NO, I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING AT ALL.
SO YOU WERE THE ONE WHO KILLED HAYAMI AND RYOKO?
WHAT? ARE YOU SAYING THEY'VE COME BACK FROM THE DEAD?
FRAC
!?
HEY... WILL YOU STOP TREATING US LIKE ZOMBIES?

PFFF... HOW EXACTLY?
AND TO THINK THAT YOU WERE THE SLICING DEVIL! YOU COULD AT LEAST HAVE TOLD US...
WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE AKIHIKO'S LITTLE BROTHER. WE THOUGHT YOU WERE A "NORMAL" LIKE ALL THE OTHERS.
I WANTED TO FIND HIM BEFORE THE POLICE DID, TO HELP HIM.
I MUST ADMIT THAT I HAD A LOT OF FUN ESTABLISHING THE KILLER'S PROFILE. FROM THE FIRST TIME THEY STARTED TALKING ABOUT THE SLICING DEVIL ON THE NEWS, I KNEW HE WAS ON OUR SIDE.
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? YOUR BROTHER TOLD US, OF COURSE!
HOW DID YOU FIND OUT IT WAS ME?
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING ALL THIS TIME!
...AND HE'S BEEN WATCHING OVER ME...
I SEE... SO HE'S STILL ALIVE...




HAVE YOU SEEN ZOMBIE? ASIDE FROM THE PART WHERE THE ZOMBIES ARE SWIMMING, I THINK IT'S A PRETTY GOOD HORROR MOVIE.
YEAH, I LIKE THE SCENE WHEN THEY COME OUT OF THEIR GRAVES.
BUT IT'S STILL A BIT DUMB REGARD-LESS...
REPLAY
LET'S GO!
COME ON!
REPLAY
I MESSED UP!
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!
I KNEW IT, IT WAS TOO EARLY! I DIDN'T RECOVER ENOUGH STRENGTH!
REPLAY

▶REPLAY
▶REPLAY
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WUSH
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GNNN

THIS IS WHY YOU DIDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING.
EVEN WORSE, YOU STARTED SEEING YOURSELF AS A NORMAL PERSON.
BY PERSUADING YOURSELF THAT I WAS DEAD, YOU STARTED DENYING MY EXISTENCE...
...WHILE THE BOTH OF US WERE FUNCTIONING IN FLAWLESS SYMBIOSIS.
SO YOU TWO...
I... I SEE...
AS FOR US, WE WERE SEPARATED WHILE FALLING DOWN THE STAIRS.
I SIMPLY PASSED OUT AFTER SLIPPING IN MY BATHROOM ...

IT LOOKS LIKE KOTARO LEFT WITHOUT MAKING SURE WE WERE OK...
AAAOW... OUCH OUCH OUCH...
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, SIS?
▶REPLAY
WHAT'S UP WITH THIS FUCKER ?!
OH SHIT... WHAT DID WE DO TO DESERVE THIS?
▶REPLAY

WE'RE HIDING OUR DISABILITY SO WE'D BE IN A WORLD OF TROUBLE IF YOU WERE TO REVEAL OUR STORY.
WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE ONE OF US...
BUT WHY DID YOU TELL ME NOT TO GO ANYWHERE NEAR RYOKO?
SO I JUST DIDN'T PAY ENOUGH ATTENTION?
BUT I FORGIVE YOU! YOU'RE THE SLICING DEVIL, A HERO TO US ALL!
YOU REALLY DIDN'T PULL ANY PUNCHES AGAINST ME!
AH, SO THAT'S WHY YOU TWO WERE FIGHTING...
HE WAS GETTING ON MY NERVES, HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO BE FRIENDS WITH A "NORMAL"...
RYOKO... WHY DID YOU ACCUSE HAYAMI OF BEING THE KILLER AND ASK ME TO PROTECT YOU?
RYOKO ...
AND I WANTED TO BE ALONE WITH YOU...
I WAS NERVOUS ...

SO I'VE DECIDED I'M GOING TO DO IT TOO! I DON'T WANT TO STAY IN THE SHADOWS FOREVER!
YES, THE SLICING DEVIL GAVE US STRENGTH!
WHAT YOU'VE DONE HAS DEEPLY MOVED ME! I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT OF TURNING "NORMALS" INTO DISABLED PEOPLE!
BUT ...
RYOKO... HAYAMI...
PLAF
UH...
TCHUC
I'LL DO IT WITHOUT ANY SECOND THOUGHT, JUST LIKE YOU!
KOTARO, LOOK AT ME!
HUH?! WHAT HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU?

I'VE SEEN THIS SCENE SOMEWHERE... AH, YES! IN DAY OF THE DEAD BY ROMERO!!
CLIC
カコ
HOLD HER TIGHT!
WHY WON'T YOU STOP YELLING ?!
AAAH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? LET ME GO!
I CAUGHT ANOTHER ONE!
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AN ORBITAL SANDER.
WHAT IS THIS ?

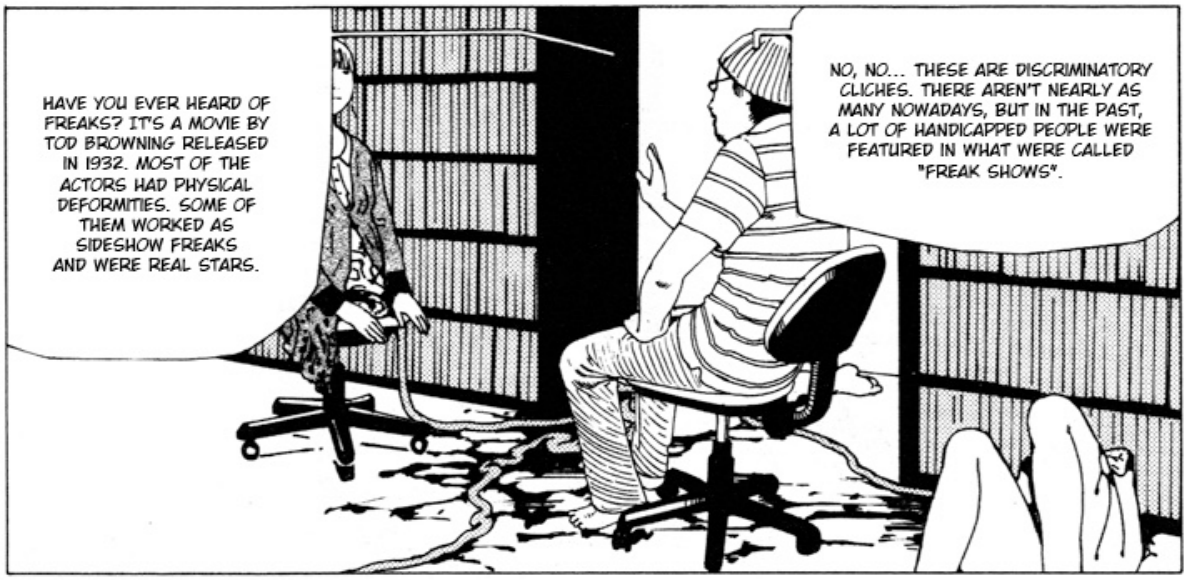
YOUR CHIN WAS A LITTLE TOO PROMINENT BUT WE'VE FIXED IT FOR YOU! IT'S MUCH BETTER NOW!
OUR REVOLUTION IS UNDER WAY... WE WANT YOU TO BECOME OUR LEADER!
I WON'T BE ABLE TO LIVE HERE ANYMORE.
PFFF... LOOK AT THIS MESS ...
THAT'S GOOD ...

THE WORLD WILL SOON SEE THE BEGINNING OF OUR REIGN!

THE MANGA ARTIST
4
AND THUS ...
...BEGAN THE GREAT REBELLION OF THE TRUNCATED PEOPLE.
"THE END"

IN THE REAL WORLD, THEY'D PROBABLY STAY IN BED... OR THEY'D AT LEAST USE WHEELCHAIRS, WOULDN'T THEY?
DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT TRUNCATED PEOPLE CAN MOVE SO QUICKLY?

...WHAT'S UP WITH THIS STORY? IT'S COMPLETELY DISCONNECTED FROM REALITY!
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS ENDING?


HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF FREAKS? IT'S A MOVIE BY TOD BROWNING RELEASED IN 1932. MOST OF THE ACTORS HAD PHYSICAL DEFORMITIES. SOME OF THEM WORKED AS SIDESHOW FREAKS AND WERE REAL STARS.
NO, NO... THESE ARE DISCRIMINATORY CLICHES. THERE AREN'T NEARLY AS MANY NOWADAYS, BUT IN THE PAST, A LOT OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE WERE FEATURED IN WHAT WERE CALLED "FREAK SHOWS".

IF YOU WATCH FREAKS SOMEDAY, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND. HE WAS ABLE TO MOVE ALL BY HIMSELF IN AN AMAZING MANNER, USING ONLY HIS ARMS.
JOHNNY ECK, ONE OF THE ACTORS, WAS AFFECTED BY A CONGENITAL DEFORMITY, THE ENTIRE LOWER HALF OF HIS BODY WAS MISSING.
OH, REALLY... I'LL HAVE TO SEE THIS MOVIE, THEN ...

THEY SAY SHE STARTED WORKING IN A CIRCUS WHEN SHE WAS ONLY THREE YEARS OLD, AND THAT SHE COULD DO A HEADSTAND OR A CARTWHEEL WITH LITTLE TO NO EFFORT.
YES, BERNIECE EVELYN "JEANIE" SMITH, A WOMAN BORN WITHOUT LEGS.
DO YOU HAVE OTHER EXAMPLES?
WOAH!

UNLIKE FREAKS, KENNY IS A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE LIFE OF A LITTLE BOY WHO USES A SKATEBOARD TO MOVE AROUND.
KENNY EASTERDAY ALSO BECAME KNOWN THANKS TO CINEMA.
HE WAS BORN WITH LEGS, BUT THEY HAD TO BE AMPUTATED BECAUSE OF A MALFORMATION.

I KNOW YOU MUST BE GETTING TIRED OF TALKING ABOUT CINEMA BUT THE CRIPPLED MASTERS, A MOVIE FROM HONG KONG, IS ANOTHER INCREDIBLE EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF ACROBATICS THE DISABLED ARE CAPABLE OF...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "INCREDIBLE"?
THIS IS A KUNG-FU MOVIE ABOUT TWO DISABLED HEROES, ONE WITHOUT ARMS, AND THE OTHER WITH ATROPHIED LEGS. IN THE LAST SCENE, THEY ATTACH THEMSELVES TO EACH OTHER TO CONFRONT THE BAD GUY.
HMM... THIS SEEMS INTERESTING!

THE LEAD ACTORS ARE TWO GENUINE HANDICAPPED PERSONS BORN WITH DEFORMED ARMS AND LEGS.
WOAH, SO IT'S FOR REAL THEN?
YOU REALLY HAVE TO SEE THEM AT WORK! ONE OF THEM CANNOT USE THE LOWER PART OF HIS BODY AT ALL BUT HE CAN WALK ON HIS HANDS EFFORTLESSLY AND TAKE PART IN ALL OF THE ACTION SCENES.
ANYWAY, THIS IS PRETTY MUCH REQUIRED AFTER ALL, BECAUSE WITHOUT ANY ACTION, IT WOULDN'T BE A KUNG-FU MOVIE ANYMORE...

I SEE... SOME PEOPLE WITH NO ARMS OR NO LEGS ARE ABLE TO MOVE NORMALLY...
YOU SEE?
I'D LIKE TO SHOOT A MOVIE VERSION OF MY STORY WITH REAL DISABLED PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO TIE THEMSELVES TO EACH OTHER!
YOUR STORY ISN'T THAT FAR FROM REALITY, AFTER ALL.

ALSO, KOTARO SHOULD HAVE FOUND OUT JUST BY GOING TO THE BATHROOM ...
THEY'RE NOT SIAMISE TWINS, RIGHT? SO HOW CAN AKIHIKO KNOW WHERE HIS BROTHER WANTS TO GO?
OK, EVEN ADMITTING THAT TRUNCATED PEOPLE CAN ACTUALLY MOVE AROUND LIKE THIS, IT SEEMS QUITE UNLIKELY THAT KOTARO DIDN'T EVER NOTICE HIS BROTHER'S PRESENCE BENEATH HIM...
HMM ...

YOU AGREE WITH ME, THEN. HERE, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TWO BROTHERS WHO'VE ALWAYS BEEN CLOSE. AKIHIKO ALWAYS KNOWS AHEAD OF TIME WHAT HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IS GOING TO DO. THAT'S HOW HE MAKES HIMSELF USEFUL AS A PAIR OF LEGS.
ER, NO, I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT FOR EACH STEP I TAKE...
I'LL ASK YOU THIS QUESTION INSTEAD: WHEN YOU WALK, DO YOU CONSCIOUSLY ORDER YOUR LEGS TO MOVE?

WELL, HUH, WELL ...
I SIT ON THE TOILET BOWL NORMALLY, ER..
ANSWER MY QUESTION, HOW DO YOU RELIEVE YOURSELF?
REGARDING THE BATHROOM... I'LL ASK YOU THIS INSTEAD: HOW DO YOU DO IT YOURSELF, WHEN YOU'RE USING THE TOILET?
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?

SO, HOW CAN YOU ASSUME THAT THE WAY YOU DO IT IS "NORMAL"?
NORMALLY? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN, "NORMALLY"? HAVE YOU STUDIED ALL THE POSSIBLE WAYS OF DEFECATING?
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE EXCRETORY ORGANS OF A TRUNCATED BODY, SO YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY KNOW HOW THESE PEOPLE RELIEVE THEMSELVES.
NO, OF COURSE NOT, BUT ...

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING FOR THOSE WHO USE THIS SYSTEM AND THEY DO NOT THINK ABOUT HOW OTHER PEOPLE URINATE.
THERE EXIST METHODS WE HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT... LIKE A TUBE THAT GOES FROM THE BLADDER TO A VALVE THAT'S USED TO URINATE.

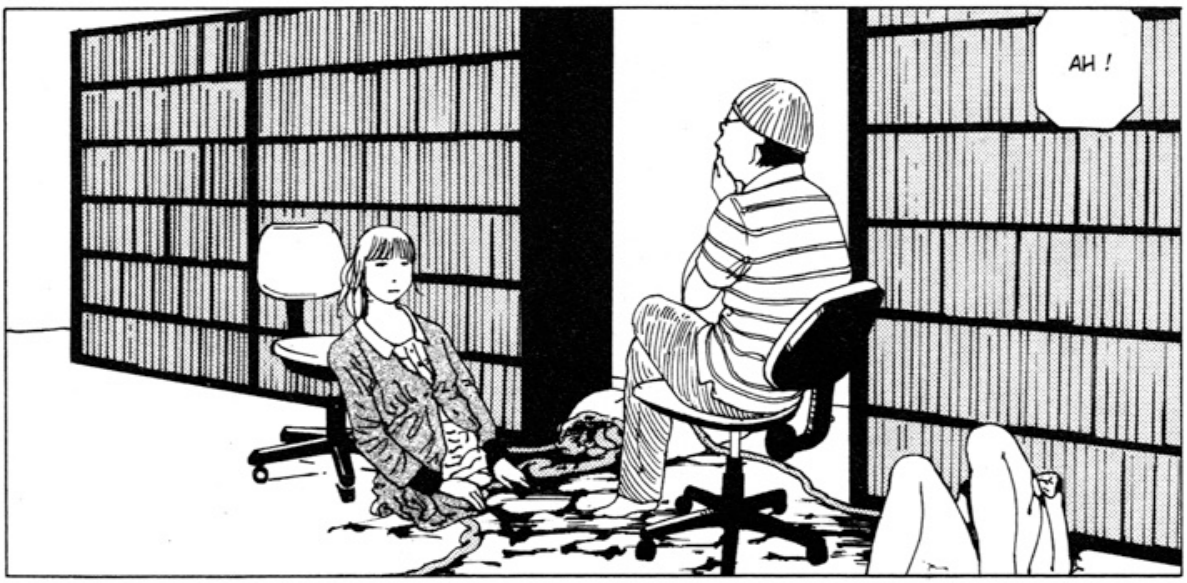
AH...
SO, YOU NOW CLEARLY SEE THAT ...

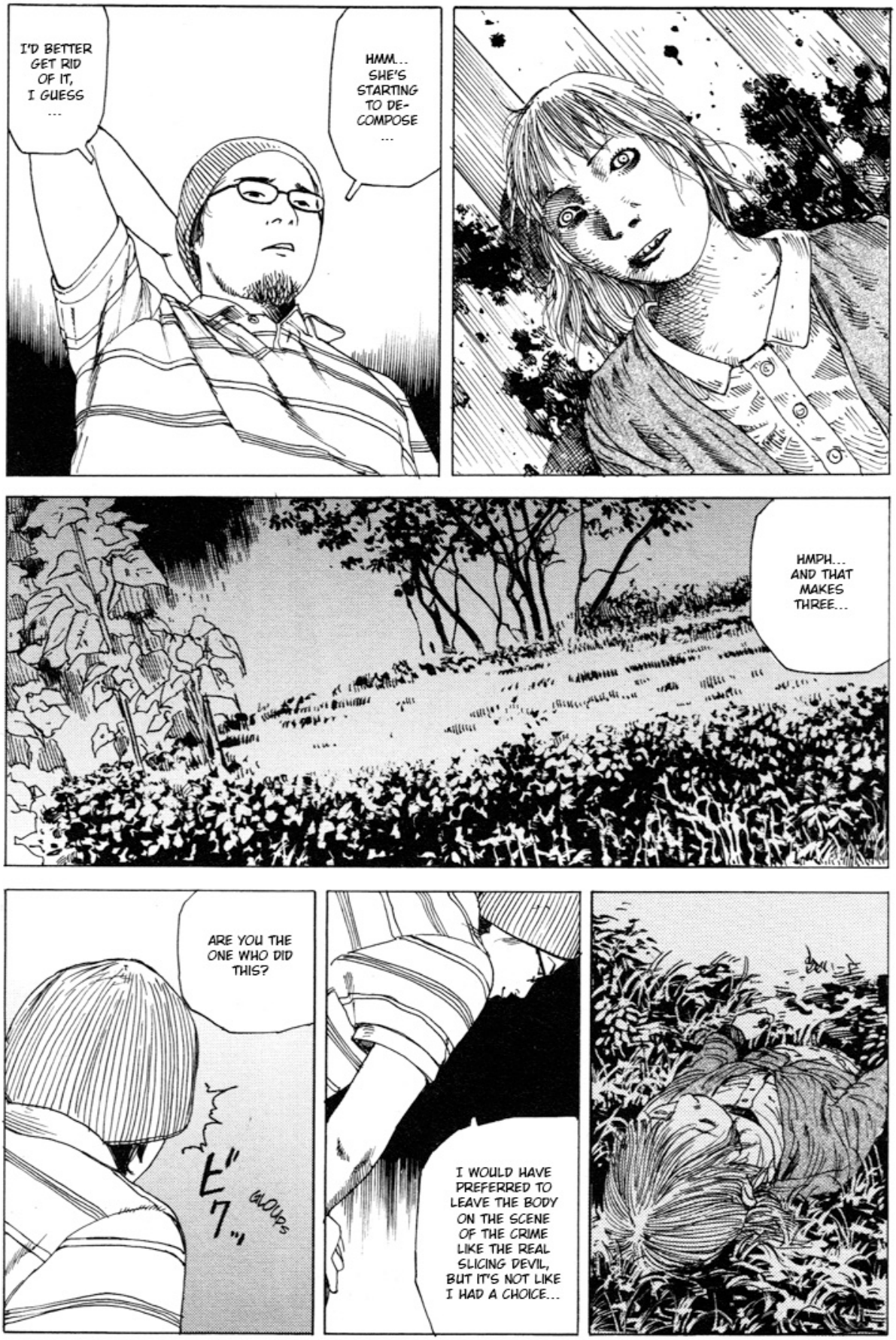
HOW CAN THERE BE SO MANY OF THEM IN SUCH A SMALL AREA? AKIHIKO, HAYAMI AND RYOKO ALL WENT TO THE SAME SCHOOL, RIGHT?
OF COURSE! LET'S ASSUME THAT TRUNCATED PEOPLE CAN LIVE NORMALLY WHILE TIED TO EACH OTHER...
DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

THE TOXIC WASTE DUMPED IN THE WATER WAS THE CAUSE OF THE DEFORMITIES THAT AFFLICTED THE BABIES BORN IN THIS TOWN.
SIMPLE! IT'S LIKE IN CHINA!
THAT'S WHY WE'RE DEALING WITH DISABLED CHILDREN!
THERE WAS A FACTORY ABOVE A RIVER THAT WENT THROUGH THEIR TOWN.

EXACTLY. IT PROVIDED INSPIRATION FOR MANY MOVIES AND SERIES, LIKE GODZILLA VS. HEDORAH AND SPECTREMAN...
BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BELIEVE THIS? BABIES BORN WITH DEFORMITIES IN JAPAN... IT ONLY HAPPENED IN THE 70IES!
I SEE!
DON'T TRY CHANGING THE SUBJECT!

I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THIS HAS AN EFFECT ON NEWBORN BABIES. WELL, MAYBE I'M EXAGGERATING A LITTLE BIT BY PORTRAYING TRUNCATED PEOPLE... BUT THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION AFTER ALL...
BUT OUR FOOD'S SANITARY SECURITY IS FAR FROM ASSURED, EVEN TODAY! DIDN'T YOU HEAR ABOUT THE CONTAMINATED RICE SCANDALS OR THE CHINESE PRODUCTS CONTAINING INSECTICIDE?


AH !


I'D BETTER GET RID OF IT, I GUESS ...
HMM... SHE'S STARTING TO DE-COMPOSE ...
HMPH... AND THAT MAKES THREE...
ARE YOU THE ONE WHO DID THIS?
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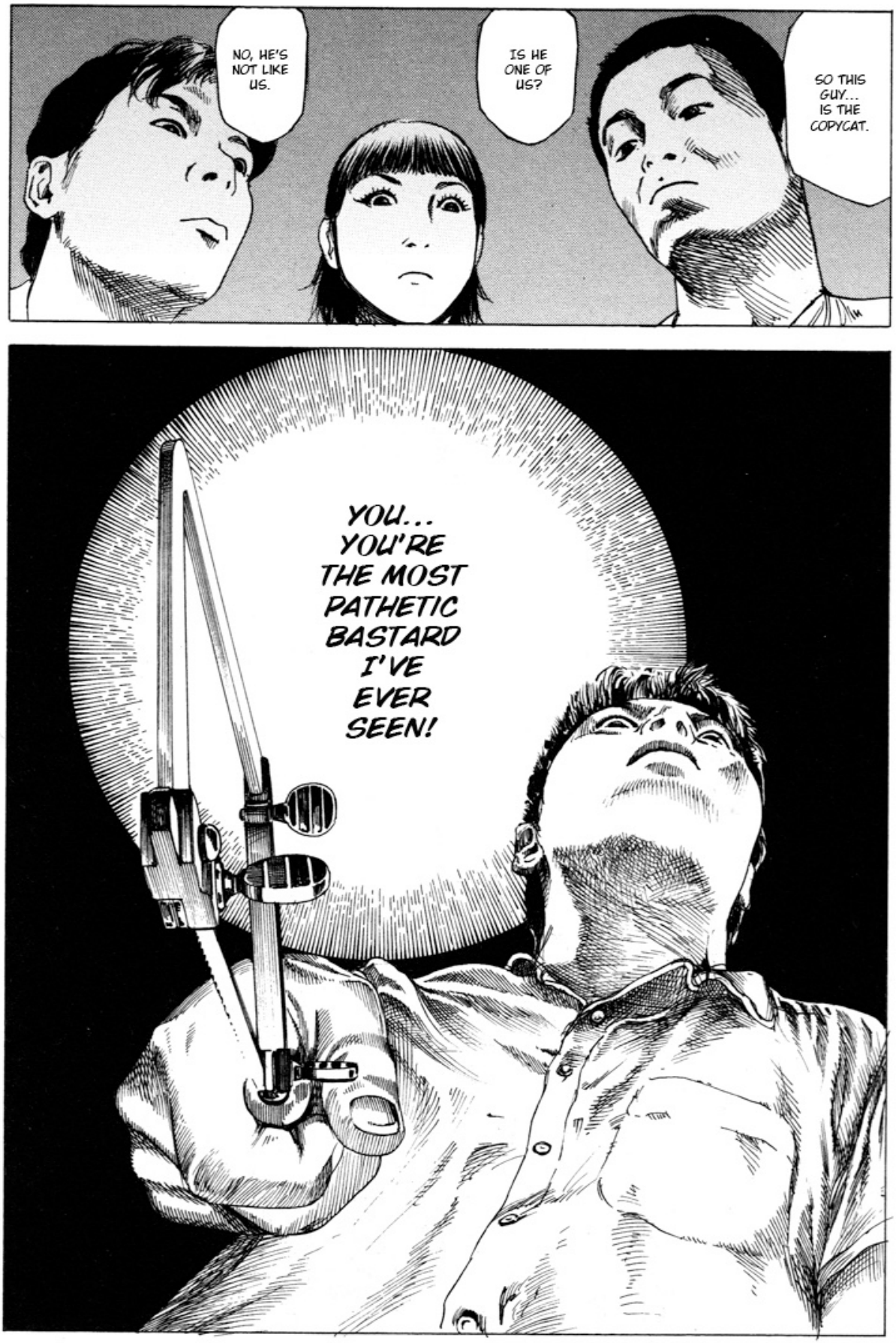
WOOPS
I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO LEAVE THE BODY ON THE SCENE OF THE CRIME LIKE THE REAL SLICING DEVIL, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD A CHOICE...


NO, HE'S NOT LIKE US.
IS HE ONE OF US?
SO THIS GUY... IS THE COPYCAT.
YOU... YOU'RE THE MOST PATHETIC BASTARD I'VE EVER SEEN!

Lexicon

A

"Are my memories real?"

Classic line for a hero when he finds out that someone who's supposed to be dead turns out to be alive.

Argento, Dario

Film director, undisputed master of the Italian horror film genre. His most famous movie is probably Suspiria.

B

Bava, Mario

Film director, pillar of the Italian horror film genre. He notably directed The Whip and the Body and Black Sunday.

Beyond, The

Italian horror film by Lucio Fulci, came out in 1981.

"Borderline" movies

Movies featuring bodies with severed torsos. Examples: Day of the Dead, Damien: Omen II. It isn't only gratuitous violence: some critics see in these mutilations the malaise of countries cut in half by the United States/U.R.S.S. antagonism, like Germany, Korea, etc. The term "borderline" can be taken both literally and figuratively, because it reminds us of unbearable violence as well as frontiers.

C

Chip bag collection

The inside of chip bags is very oily, it's better to clean it with a towel before archiving them.

D

Damien: Omen II

American horror film by Don Taylor, it came out in 1978. The first movie was a big success at the box-office.

Day of the Dead

American horror movie directed by George A. Romero that came out in 1985. Preceded by "Night of the Living Dead" and "Dawn of the Dead", this is the third movie from the "Zombie Saga".

F

Fulci, Lucio

Iconic director of Italian gore movies.

Full-blown madness

The reader follows the story as it happens in the mind of the main character, but he might find out that this character is mad, and that the events he related can't be taken as granted. This is one of the many ways in which the concept called "lying narrator" can be used.

G

Gaffer

Very useful for muzzling a kidnapped person or to remove the remaining tape from a poster you've just brought back home.

H

Hot Tub Murders

Very successful television series that aired on Asahi TV. Each episode featured at least one scene in which young girls walked around with their breasts exposed.

L

"Like this, I'll be able to clean myself if there's too much blood" (Kotaro, p.23)

He's right, but shouldn't he at least remove his shirt?

Literary works that use narrative manipulation

There are a lot of novels that use narrative manipulation, but it's hard to make a list. The shock that comes from reading these kinds of books isn't the same if you're aware before reading that a trick of some kind will be used. It's possible to mention the works by Ichi Orihara, though, as a good half of his works uses devices like narrative manipulation, and people read him expecting to be tricked. It's one of those rare cases in which you can talk about the nature of the tricks contained within the book without spoiling it.

M

Mother of Tears, The

Italian/American horror film directed by Dario Argento that came out in 2007. Last movie from the "Three Mothers" trilogy. The film features a sorceress, but she does not do magic tricks with her nose, and she doesn't live with her two aunts either.

Movies about the disabled

Movies featuring physically or mentally handicapped people. In the case of a physical handicap, a genuine disabled person usually plays the part.

Movies that use narrative manipulation

Narrative manipulation works best without images, but it's possible to find some examples of it in cinema, particularly in fantasy or sci-fi movies: somebody alive was actually dead from the beginning, Earth is in fact another planet, etc.

Murder in the bathroom

As you can see in Psycho by Alfred Hitchcock, "murder" and "bathroom" go together very well.

Murder of Roger Ackroyd, The

Mystery novel by Agatha Christie·

Mutilator, The

American horror movie directed by Buddy Cooper, it came out in 1983· Good example of the numerous gore films that came out in the 80ies·

N

Narrative manipulation

Device that uses the reader's preconceived ideas and convictions to trick him· Novels do not feature images, so this device is often used in mystery novels· This kind of obfuscation can be done in lots of ways: by making the reader believe that a certain character is a man (even though he's a woman), that another one is white (even though he's black), that an old man is young... The writer can also use the same name for two different characters· In Japan, and elsewhere, a lot of writers are experimenting with new ways of tricking the reader by distorting time and space·

P

Photos of victims published in the papers

When no photos of a victim have been taken recently, journalists are forced to use older ones· Sometimes, there's a difference between the victim's physical appearance on the scene of the crime and on the published photo· When the victim is in her thirties and she's showed in the papers wearing a school girl uniform, it's a little bit embarrassing·

R

Romero, George A·

Master of horror cinema who swore before God to dedicate his life to the making of zombie movies·

S

Saw

Vital tool for cutting up a body·

"She's still taking a shower?"

Classic line when a character is about to find a corpse·

T

Thursday's Thriller

Two hour t·v· series that aired on Nippon Television, on Thursdays at 9 PM·

Trick

T·V· series featuring Naoko Yamada (Yukie Nakama), an unsuccessful magician, and Jiro Ueda (Hiroshi Abe), a physics teacher· They both elucidate events that seem supernatural at first glance, but turn out to be the work of humans·

W

"Wait here, I'll go take a shower" (line)

A killer must not lose his composure in front of a slender, sweat-drenched body·

Z

Zombi 2

Italian horror film directed by Lucio Fulci that came out in 1979· This film is chock-full of explicit and sinister scenes, but I think that it's a really well-made horror film... not taking into account the bit where the zombies swim· A long time ago, Nippon Television aired this movie for the "2 PM Cinema" show, and the viewers could watch, right in the middle of the day, the famous scene where someone's trachea is bitten off·

1. SHINTARO KAGO

MANGA ARTIST BORN IN TOKYO IN 1969. HIS FIRST WORK WAS PUBLISHED IN 1988 IN THE COMIC BOX MAGAZINE. STANDING OUT THANKS TO HIS SINGULAR IMAGINATION, HE CREATES ERO GURO OR SCATOLOGICAL MANGAS, IN WHICH HE NEVER CEASES TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES.

2. RYUICHI KASUMI

AUTHOR OF CRIME FICTION NOVELS BORN IN OKAYAMA IN 1958. HIS FIRST BOOK CALLED ONAJI HAKA NO MUJINA HAS BEEN SELECTED IN 1994 FOR THE SEISHI YOKOMIZO PRIZE FOR MYSTERY NOVELS. HE IS SEEN IN JAPAN AS ONE OF THE PIONEERS OF HUMOROUS CRIME FICTION NOVELS*.

*IN JAPANESE, BAKA MISU MEANS "LUDICROUS MYSTERY NOVELS". AS AN ANECDOTE AND TO GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF THE GENRE, FRACTION WON THE INTERNATIONAL PRIZE OF BAKA MISU IN 2010, AWARDED BY ABOUT SIXTY READERS DURING A MODEST CEREMONY ORGANIZED IN A LIBRARY.

Mangas and Mystery

1. The prerequisites for the making of a mystery manga

SHINTARO KAGO: WITH FRACTION, I WANTED TO TRY WRITING CRIME FICTION AND MYSTERY MANGA WITHOUT GOING THROUGH PRE-PUBLISHING. THIS IS A COMMON PRACTICE IN LITERATURE, WHEN BOOKS ARE IMMEDIATELY RELEASED AS POCKET BOOKS, BUT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN OFTEN IN THE WORLD OF MANGA. I WAS ONLY ABLE TO CONSTRUCT THE PLOT BECAUSE I KNEW HOW MANY PAGES THE BOOK WOULD HAVE BEFOREHAND.

RYUCHI KASUMI: WHEN A STORY IS PRE-PUBLISHED, THERE'S ALWAYS A PROBLEM OF DISCONNECTION ONCE ALL THE CHAPTERS ARE PUT TOGETHER.

SK: IT'S TRUE (LAUGHS)!

RK: IN THE CASE OF A NOVEL FIRST PUBLISHED IN A MAGAZINE, AN IMPORTANT AMOUNT OF RE-WRITING IS NECESSARY BEFORE THE BOOK IS PUT ON SHELVES. I THINK IT'S EVEN MORE COMPLICATED IN THE CASE OF A MANGA.

SK: YES, BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO RE-DRAW PARTS OF IT. MOST OF THE TIME, WHEN I WRITE, I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT LEAVING HINTS TO HELP THE READER ANTICIPATE HOW THE EVENTS WILL TURN OUT, BUT WITH FRACTION, THE READER'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHAIN OF EVENTS WAS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE THE STORY WORK. THIS IS ALSO WHY THE FIRST PART HAS SO MUCH DIALOGUE.

RK: THIS IS INEVITABLE WHEN WRITING A STORY ABOUT A MYSTERY. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CREATE A PLOT WITHOUT GIVING OUT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INFORMATION TO THE READER. HE HAS TO BE PATIENT, EVEN IF HE THINKS THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY IS BORING. IN MY CASE, THIS IS WHEN I START BUILDING UP TENSION AND ADDING ABSURD SITUATIONS.

SK: IT'S LIKE YOU'RE SAYING TO THE READER: "WAIT JUST A LITTLE BIT LONGER, WE'LL GET DOWN TO BUSINESS SOON ENOUGH!"

RK: EXACTLY (LAUGHS)! WHEN PEOPLE WHO DON'T MAKE A HABIT OF READING MYSTERY NOVELS SAY THAT THEY COULDN'T GET THROUGH THE FIRST THIRD, I WANT TO SAY TO THEM: "BE A BIT MORE PATIENT, GUYS!" I COULD ADD RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE A WARNING LIKE THIS: "READ UP TO THIS PAGE, AT LEAST, IT GETS INTERESTING THEN!"
SK: THAT'S A GREAT IDEA (LAUGHS)!-TAIN AMOUNT OF INFORMATION TO THE READER. HE HAS TO BE PATIENT, EVEN IF HE THINKS THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY IS BORING. IN MY CASE, THIS IS WHEN I START BUILDING UP TENSION AND ADDING ABSURD SITUATIONS.

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SK: THAT'S A GREAT IDEA (LAUGHS)!

2· Mystery and Mysticism as Formative Experiences

SK: I HAD THE IDEA OF WRITING THIS MANGA BECAUSE I ALWAYS LIKED MYSTERY NOVELS, I USED TO READ A LOT OF THEM.

RK: DID YOU READ BOOKS BY EDOGAWA RAMPO?

SK: I READ THOSE PUBLISHED BY POPLARSHA. I COULD FIND THEM AT THE SCHOOL'S LIBRARY.

RK: THAT'S RIGHT, I REMEMBER NOW (LAUGHS)!

SK: THE SHONEN TANTEIDAN SERIES ("THE YOUNG DETECTIVES CLUB") WAS A FESTIVAL OF LITTLE JOKES. LIKE WHEN KOBAYASHI DISGUISES HIMSELF AS A LETTER BOX, FOR EXAMPLE.

RK: WITH MY COLLEAGUES, WE TALK ABOUT HOW OUR STYLE DIFFERS IN RELATION TO THE SERIES THAT WE USED TO READ: ARSENE LUPIN, SHERLOCK HOLMES OR "THE YOUNG DETECTIVES CLUB". MOST AUTHORS OF CRIME FICTION STARTED OUT WITH HOLMES OR LUPIN, AND THIS BROUGHT THEM TO WRITE BOOKS CLOSE TO THE RULES OF THIS GENRE. BUT THOSE WHO STARTED BY READING "THE YOUNG DETECTIVES CLUB" OFTEN TURN OUT WRITING HUMOROUS CRIME FICTION NOVELS, LIKE ME. THE FIRST BOOKS ONE READS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR AN AUTHOR.

SK: IN THE 70'S, PEOPLE USED BELIEVE IN ALL KINDS OF WEIRD STUFF: FLYING SAUCERS, GHOSTS, NOSTRADAMUS, ETC. MOVIES LIKE THE EXORCIST OR THE OMEN ENJOYED A LOT OF SUCCESS.

RK: THE SUPERNATURAL WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS CULTURE. MORE THAN THE HORRIFIC ASPECT OF THESE FILMS, IT WAS THE OCCULT THAT INTERESTED PEOPLE. I REMEMBER WHEN PHOTOS OF GHOST WERE A TREND, YOU'D FIND SOME IN MAGAZINES FOR ADULT READERS LIKE JOSEI JISHIN, AND I FOUND THEM ASTONISHING. NOWADAYS, IT'S VERY EASY TO MAKE THEM WITH IMAGE EDITING TECHNIQUES, BUT THE OLD GHOST PHOTOS WERE MORE RUDIMENTARY.

SK: EVEN TODAY, I SOMETIMES WATCH ON YOUTUBE VIDEOS ABOUT SPIRITS, BUT THEY'RE SO WELL DONE IT TURNS ME OFF, IT SEEMS. IN THE PAST, YOU'D REALLY THINK THESE PICTURES WERE TAKEN BY CHANCE. THE VOICES THEY SAID YOU COULD HEAR ON SOME RECORDS WERE ALSO RECORDED BY ACCIDENT, SO IT WAS ALL THE MORE TERRIFYING.

3· Cinema, Mangas and Literature

RK: HUM... (HE LOOKS AT SKETCHES OF FRACTION) YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT NARRATIVE MANIPULATION, RIGHT?

SK: YES! THIS IS PRECISELY THE SUBJECT OF THIS BOOK. I WAS WONDERING IF IT WAS POSSIBLE TO USE NARRATIVE MANIPULATION IN A MANGA, AS IT'S MORE OFTEN USED BY NOVELISTS.

RK: YOU CAN FIND EXAMPLES IN CINEMA. BESIDES, BY READING YOUR OTHER MANGAS, I ALWAYS WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU LIKED CINEMA. AM I WRONG?

SK: NO, YOU'RE RIGHT (LAUGHS)! I MAKE MOVIES MYSELF FROM TIME TO TIME*. LIKE I SAY IN MY BOOK, ONE OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGAS AND MOVIES IS THAT MANGAS ARE MADE OF STATIC IMAGES. IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO DRAW A CHARACTER WHILE HE'S WALKING, YOU HAVE TO

*ANIMATED SHORT FILMS

FIND A WAY OF SHOWING WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE IMAGE, OR THE SCENE WON'T WORK. IN CINEMA, YOU COULD ON THE CONTRARY HAVE SCENES THAT WOULD BE OF NO USE WHATSOEVER IN A MANGA.

RK: THIS IS ONLY MY OPINION, BUT I THINK THAT YASUJIRO OZU'S MOVIES ARE CLOSE TO MANGAS, REGARDING THE SCREENPLAY AND THE WAY HE HANDLES DIALOGUE. FOR ME, IT'S MANGA.

SK: BUT WHEN A MANGA ARTIST TRIES IMITATING OZU, THE RESULTS ARE COMICAL. I USED SOME LINES FROM LATE SPRING THAT I FOUND INTERESTING, AND PUT THEM IN EKIMAE HANAYOME.

RK: IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO IMITATE OZU IN LITERATURE. OR RATHER, IT'S OF NO INTEREST. IT'S POSSIBLE TO WRITE SENTENCES LIKE "THERE'S A VASE, THERE'S A SLIDING DOOR", BUT IT'S LOUSY. YOU HAVE TO REPRODUCE THE SCENT, HIS PECULIAR SENSIBILITY.

4· Works in Volumes

SK: ASIDE FROM MANGAS AND MOVIES, I ALSO CREATE FIGURINES: POOP, CORPSES, THESE KINDS OF THINGS. THE FACT THAT TOYS LIKE THESE REALLY EXIST AND ARE SOLD IS SOME SORT OF JOKE TO ME.

RK: THIS REMINDS ME OF JURO KARA'S RED TENT*. HE SET UP A TENT, AND PEOPLE CAME BY TO SEE HIS WORK. IT WAS SURROUNDED BY THE POLICE'S ANTI-RIOT SQUAD. FOR KARA, ALL THIS WAS LIKE A THEATRE PLAY. YOU, YOU'RE A THEATRE COMPANY ALL BY YOURSELF. YOU SET UP YOUR OWN RED TENT IN THE WORLD OF MANGA.

SK: I DON'T REALLY LIKE WORKING IN A GROUP, THAT'S WHY I ALWAYS WORK ALONE. IT'S NOT ONLY ABOUT MAKING FIGURINES. THE MERE FACT THAT A TOY REPRESENTING A DISMEMBERED CORPSE IS BEING SOLD, LIKE ANY OTHER TOY, IS A WORK OF ART. OR RATHER A JOKE.

RK: ACTUALLY, YOUR ART STARTS AS SOON AS THE CONSUMER LEAVES HIS HOUSE. AT THIS MOMENT, HIS GOAL IS TO BUY YOUR TOY.

SK: WHAT IS OF INTEREST TO ME IS THAT THESE TOYS ARE BOUGHT BY A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE. MY NAME IS NOT WRITTEN ANYWHERE ON THEM. PASSERSBY BUY THEM. PEOPLE ARE CURIOUS, PUT 200 YENS IN THE SLOT, PULL

* ACTOR, AUTHOR AND DIRECTOR, HE WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR FIGURES FROM JAPAN'S UNDERGROUND THEATRE IN THE 60-70'S.

THE LEVER, OPEN THE CAPSULE AND FIND THE OBJECT.

RK: I TALKED ABOUT JURO KARA, BUT YOUR WAY OF DISRUPTING EVERYDAY LIFE REMINDS ME OF SHUJI TERAYAMA*.

SK: FROM TIME TO TIME, I GO TO ONE OF MY FRIENDS' STORE IN KOENJI, IT SELLS FIGURINES. WHEN I'M INSIDE THE STORE, I OVERHEAR THE VOICES OF PASSERSBY WALKING OUTSIDE. SOMETIMES, A MOTHER WOULD WALK IN FRONT OF THE STORE WITH HER CHILD, AND HE'D REALLY BE INTERESTED IN THE TOYS, BUT THE MOTHER WOULD TELL HIM TO PRESS ON. I LIKE SEEING SCENES LIKE THIS. CHILDREN REALLY LIKE POOP AND CRUEL THINGS.

*MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST (WRITER, POET, PLAYWRIGHT, FILMMAKER, PHOTOGRAPHER) WHOSE COLOSSAL AND OFTEN PROVOCATIVE WORK HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE JAPANESE AVANT-GARDE IN THE 60-70'S.

5· To Embody a Genre

SK: HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN PEOPLE SAY YOU'RE MAKING BAKA MISU*?

RK: IT'S DOESN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL. BUT THIS TERM CAN SIGNIFY A LOT OF THINGS. THERE ARE POSITIVE ASPECTS - AND SOME NEGATIVE ONES. BY THE WAY, IT SEEMS LIKE PEOPLE SEE YOU AS THE STANDARD-BEARER FOR ERO GURO.

SK: YES, THERE LIES THE PUBLIC'S EXPECTATIONS. THEY ALWAYS ASSOCIATE MY WORK TO ERO GURO AND POOP (LAUGHS).

RK: IF SOMEONE ASKS ME TO WRITE A STORY WITHOUT ANY IMPROBABLE EVENTS, I'M DOWNRIGHT UPSET. I REALLY WONDER WHY (LAUGHS).

SK: WHEN I'M NOT ALLOWED TO DRAW POOP, I ALWAYS FIND A WAY TO PUT SOME IN THERE ANYWAY. THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE EXPECT OF ME. THEY SOMETIMES ASK ME IF I EAT SHIT OR DISSECT DOGS, BUT AN AUTHOR AND HIS WORK ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT THINGS.

RK: IN MY BOOKS, THERE ARE SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF DISMEMBERED BODIES, AND PEOPLE ASK ME IF I CAN LOOK AT A CORPSE WITHOUT FLINCHING. I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO IT. GORE FILMS DO NOTHING FOR ME, BUT MY SKIN TURNS PALE WHEN I WATCH MEDICAL DOCUMENTARIES (LAUGHS). MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS THAT I PUT EMPHASIS ON REALISM IN MY FICTIONAL STORIES.

SK: THIS IS A WAY OF SHOWING THAT THE WORK HAS BEEN CAREFULLY PRODUCED.

RK: EXACTLY. ONE DAY, I WOULD LIKE IT VERY MUCH IF YOU WERE TO WRITE A SCIENCE-FICTION STORY THAT WOULD MIX VERY ELABORATE SCIENTIFIC ELEMENTS AND YOUR OWN DEVIOUS IDEAS. I WOULD BE VERY CURIOUS TO SEE THE CHEMICAL REACTION OF THESE TWO EXTREMES.

SK: THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR INTEREST.

RK: I'M COUNTING ON YOU.

*BAKA MEANS "STUPID", "DUMB", BUT IN THE CASE OF BAKA MISU, THE TERM REFERS TO THE HIGHLY IMPROBABLE AND COMICAL SIDE OF MYSTERY STORIES. IT'S POSSIBLE TO USE IT PEJORATIVELY.

BACK FROM THE FRONT

THAT GUY HAS JUST BEEN LAUGHING NON-STOP FOR A WEEK STRAIGHT.
は
HA
I WONDER WHAT'S SO GODDAMN FUNNY?
HONEY, I'M HOME.

TODAY, I'VE RECEIVED THIS MANY VEGETABLES.
ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?
HAVING A WOMAN'S BODY IS NICE FOR TIMES LIKE THESE.
JUST KIDDING. I'M LYING. IT'S A JOKE !!
NGAAAH
H-HONEY, HANG IN THERE!!
DOES YOUR BODY THIRST AGAIN !?
GAARGHH
NGHOOO
HOLD ON.
I'LL PUT YOU AT EASE.
SHUPP
SHUPP

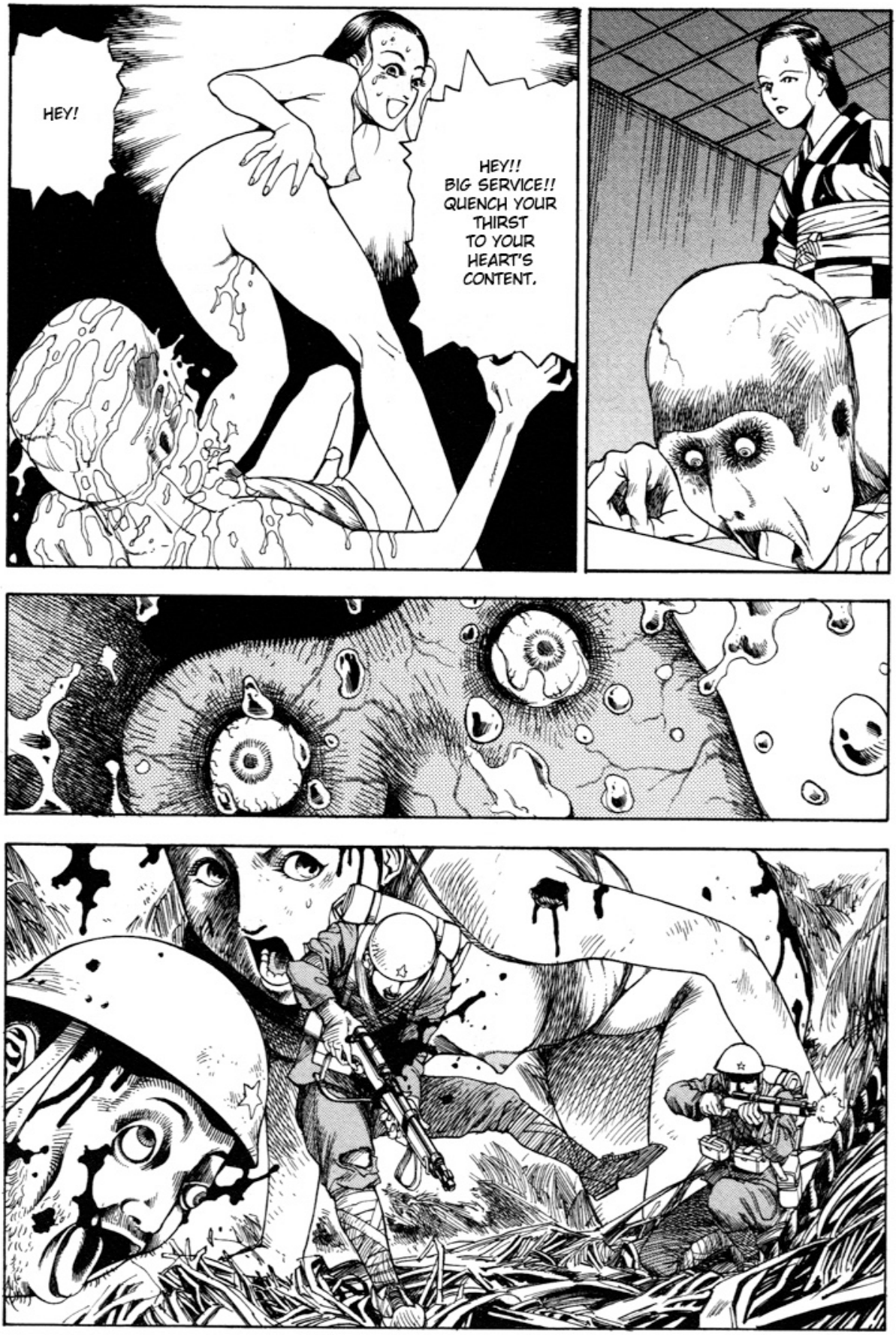
HIS SKIN IS THIN, SO HE ORGASMS QUICKLY.
AAAH... !
DO IT, YOU LOOSE CUNT! HOW MANY DOZENS OF DICKS HAVE YOU FUCKED ?
EVERYTHING WAS BLAMED ON ME.
IT WASN'T LIKE THIS IN THE OLD DAYS.

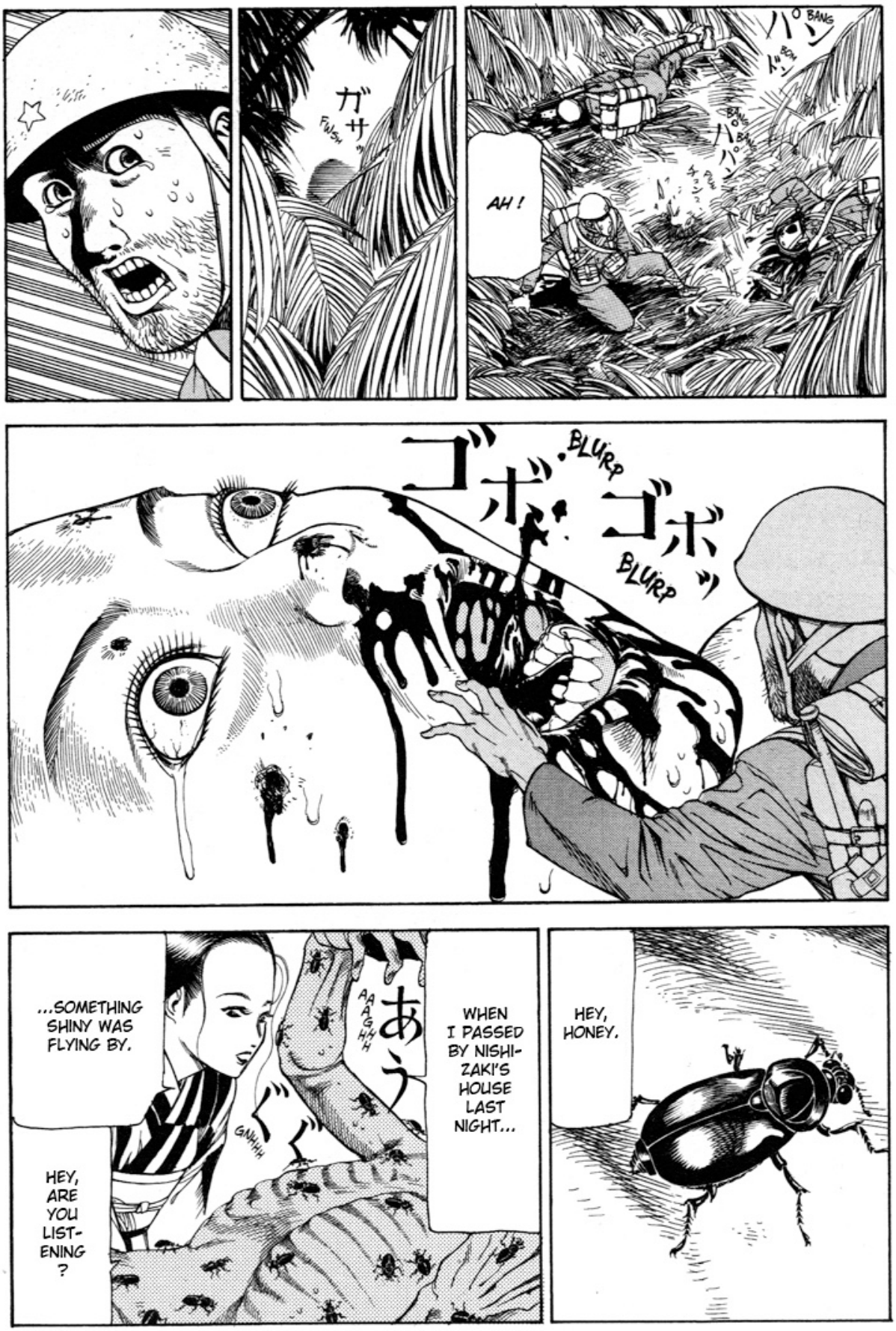
BUT NOW, HIS BODY AND MIND ARE IN MY HANDS.
AND I'VE NEVER BEEN WITH ANYONE BUT HIM.
I CAN SEE THE BLOOD VESSELS THROUGH THE SKIN.
HUAH!

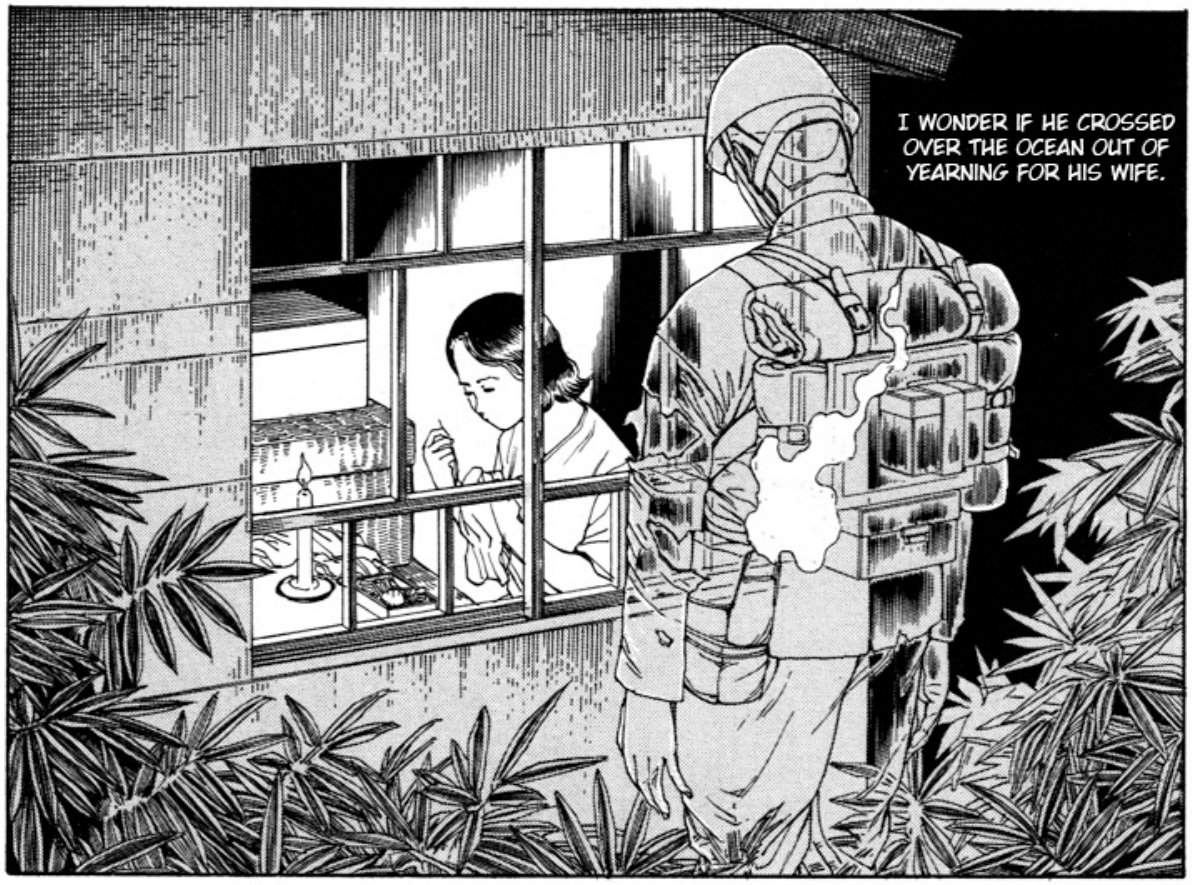
WELL? FEELS GOOD, DOESN'T IT? FEELS GOOD, DOESN'T IT?
HONEY, I FOUND SOMETHING NICE.

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF DREAMS HE HAS WHILE SLEEPING WITH HIS EYES OPEN.
HALF HIS EYELIDS ARE DISINTEGRATED, SO HE CAN'T SHUT THEM.
HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE BROUGHT TO ORGASM BY BUGS ?
LESS THAN A WORM ?
WHAT DOES THAT MAKE YOU, WHO WAS BROUGHT TO CLIMAX BY WORMS ?
DO YOU REMEMBER? YOU USED TO CALL ME A WORM.
ピトン
ピトン
ポトッ

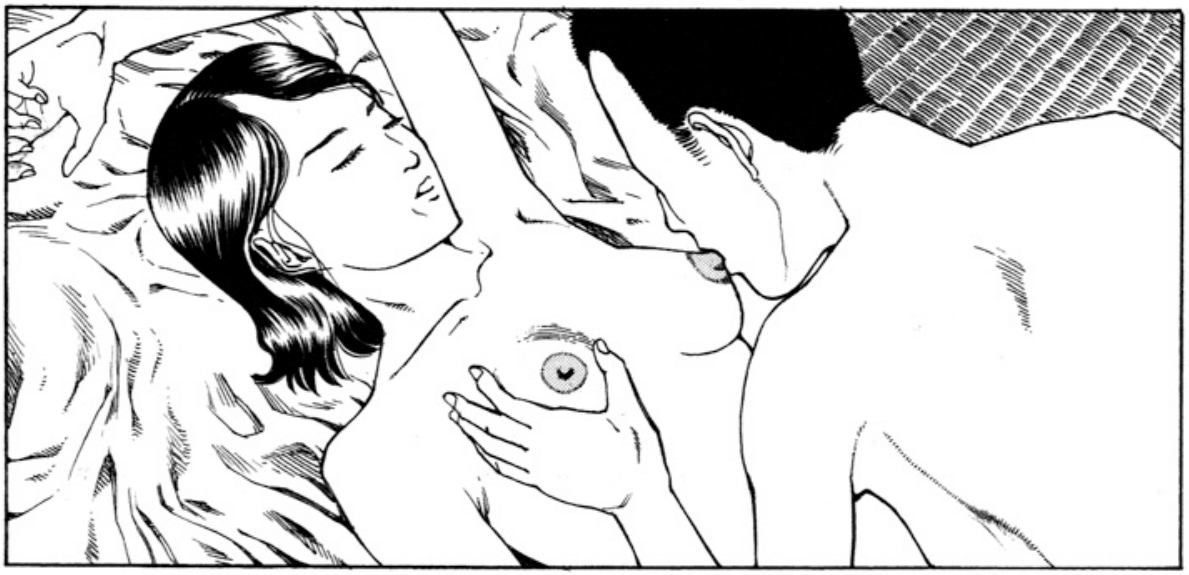
IF YOU WANT ME TO LICK IT, COME ALL THE WAY HERE.
ALRIGHT, CRAWL OVER HERE.
COME ON!!
DOES YOUR BODY STILL THIRST ?
HOLD ON.
AAA
AGHHH
THIS WAY! FOLLOW THE SOUND OF MY HANDS!
PAF
PAF
DO YOUR BEST !!
PAF
GO ON. THERE, JUST A LITTLE MORE!!
GO ALL THE WAY OVER THERE! RUB YOUR BODY OVER THERE!
PTEUU
YOU DID WELL. HERE'S YOUR REWARD.
SHURP
SHURP

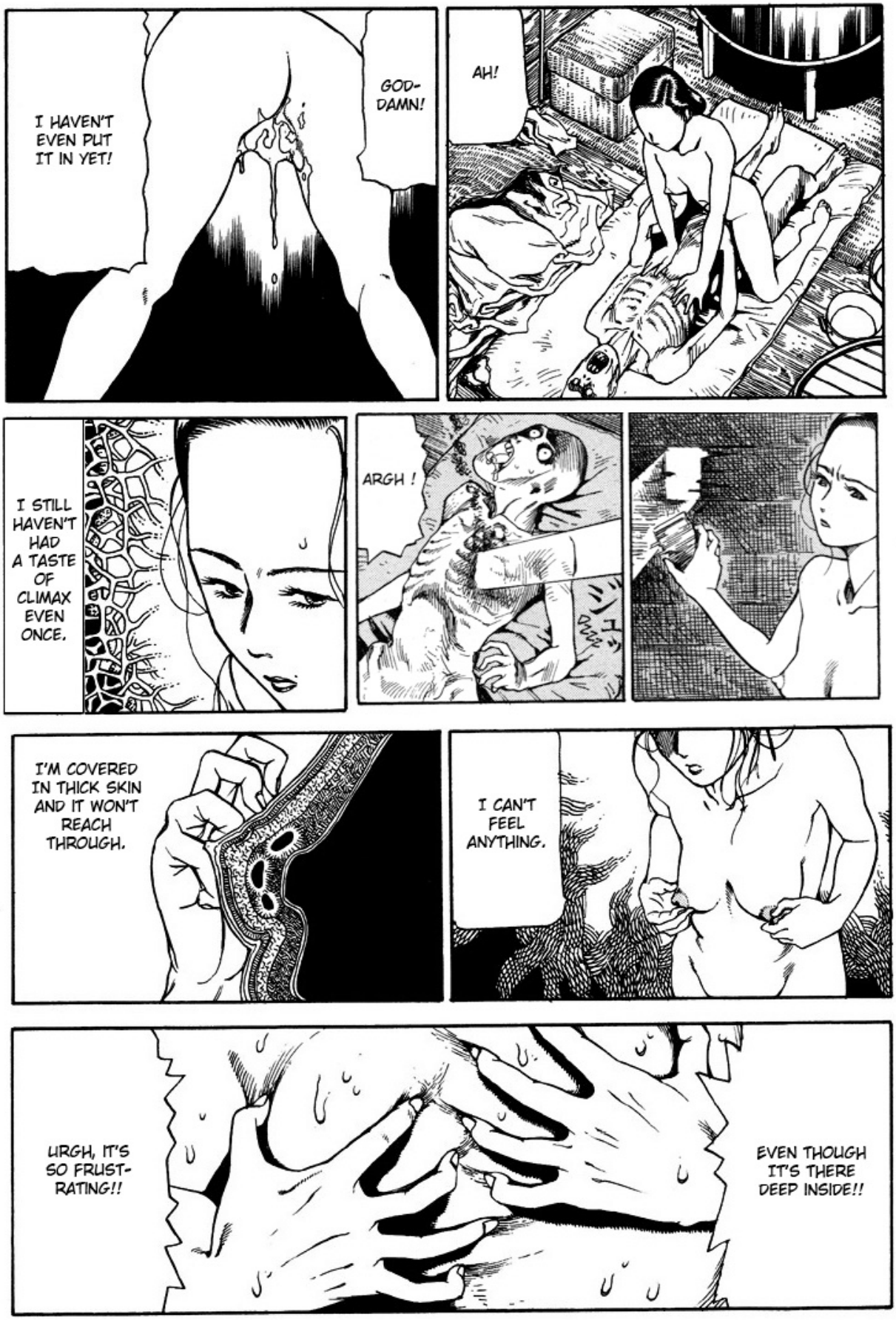

HEY!
HEY!!
BIG SERVICE!!
QUENCH YOUR
THIRST
TO YOUR
HEART'S
CONTENT.


ガサ
FWSH
ハン
BANG
AH!
ゴボ
BLURP
ゴボッ
BLURP
あう
AAGHH
ぐぐ
GNHHH
...SOMETHING SHINY WAS FLYING BY.
HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING?
WHEN I PASSED BY NISHIZAKI'S HOUSE LAST NIGHT...
HEY, HONEY.

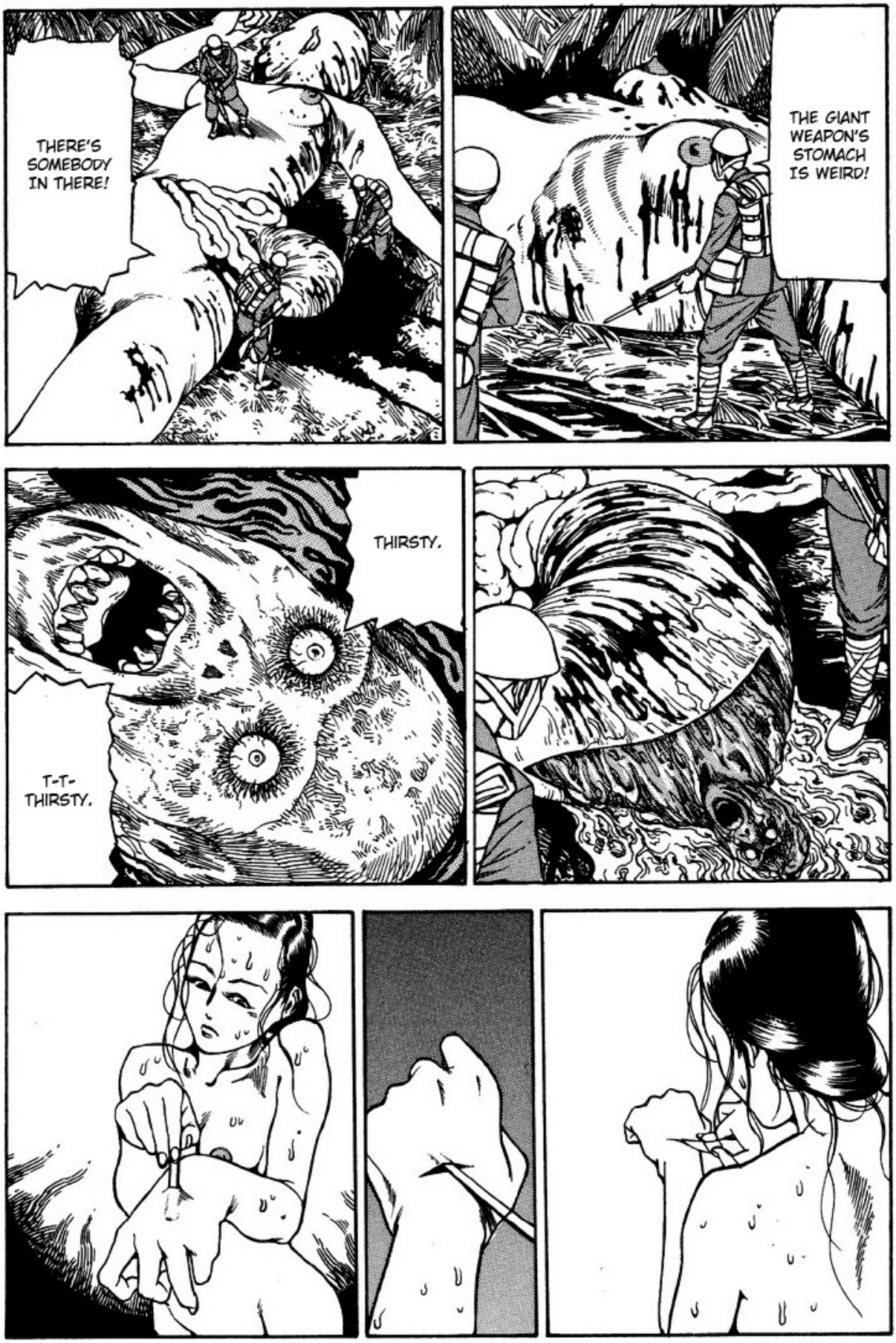

I WONDER IF HE CROSSED OVER THE OCEAN OUT OF YEARNING FOR HIS WIFE.

SHE'S SCREWING THE BAR-KEEPER'S SON ACROSS THE STREET.
BUT THAT MARRIED WOMAN...




I HAVEN'T EVEN PUT IT IN YET!
GOD-DAMN!
AH!
I STILL HAVEN'T HAD A TASTE OF CLIMAX EVEN ONCE.
ARGH !
I'M COVERED IN THICK SKIN AND IT WON'T REACH THROUGH.
I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING.
URGH, IT'S SO FRUST-RATING!!
EVEN THOUGH IT'S THERE DEEP INSIDE!!

I'M JEALOUS !!
HE GETS OFF SO EASILY.
PERHAPS BECAUSE THE SKIN AROUND THE ANUS IS SO THIN, HE CLIMAXES JUST FROM SHITTING.
CAPTAIN!!
WAS THE 54TH UNIT WIPED OUT...?
I DON'T SEE ANY SUR-VIVORS!!


THERE'S SOMEBODY IN THERE!
THE GIANT WEAPON'S STOMACH IS WEIRD!
THIRSTY.
T-T-THIRSTY.

EEK!
W-WHAT'S THE MATTER ?!

シャキ
SHUK
ギ
HGNNN
ギ
HGNNN
シャキ
SHUK
シャキ
SHUK
ギ
ヴジュル
SPLUTCH
ウジュル
SPLUTCH
ぐぐぐ
GNNN
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SPLUTCH
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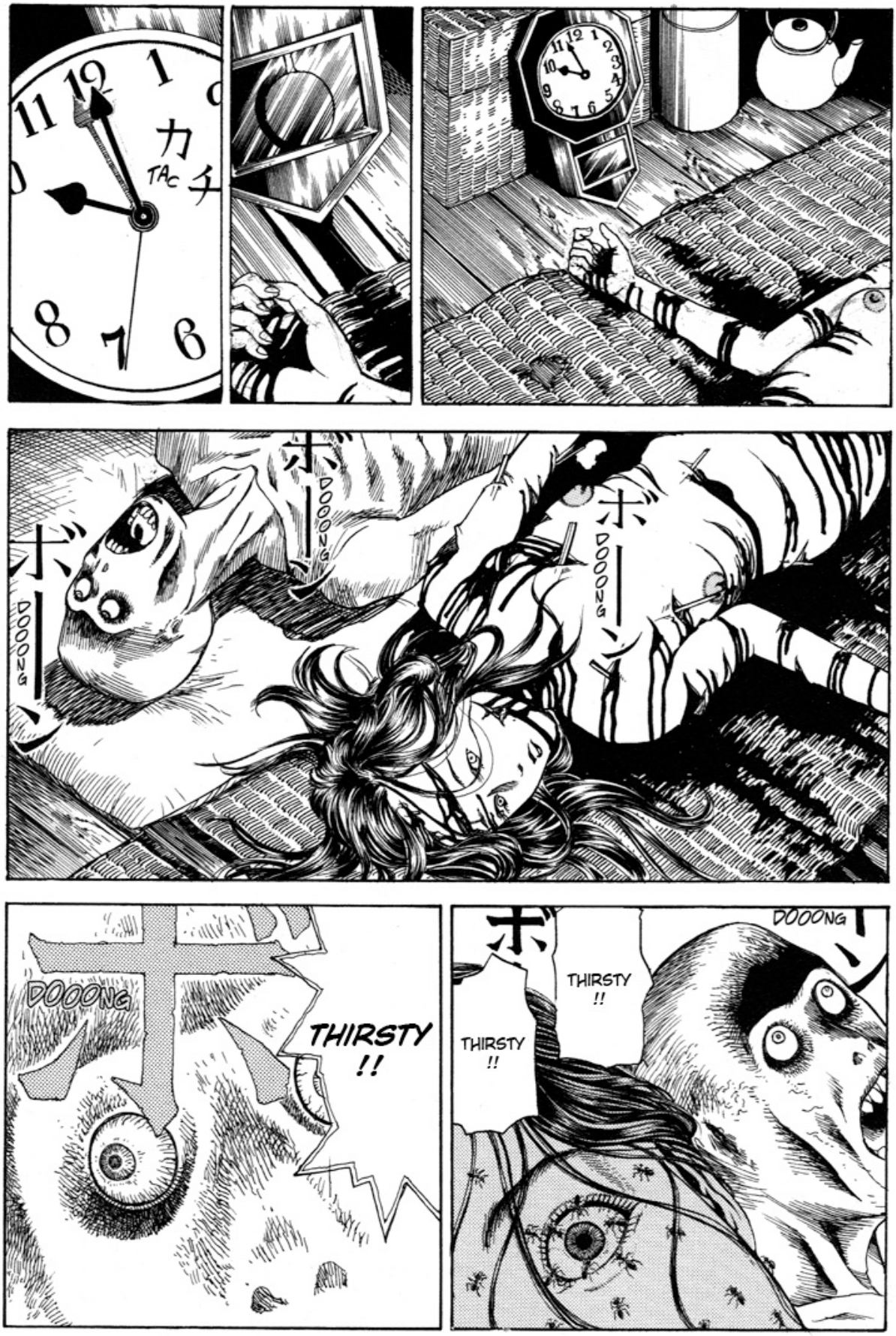
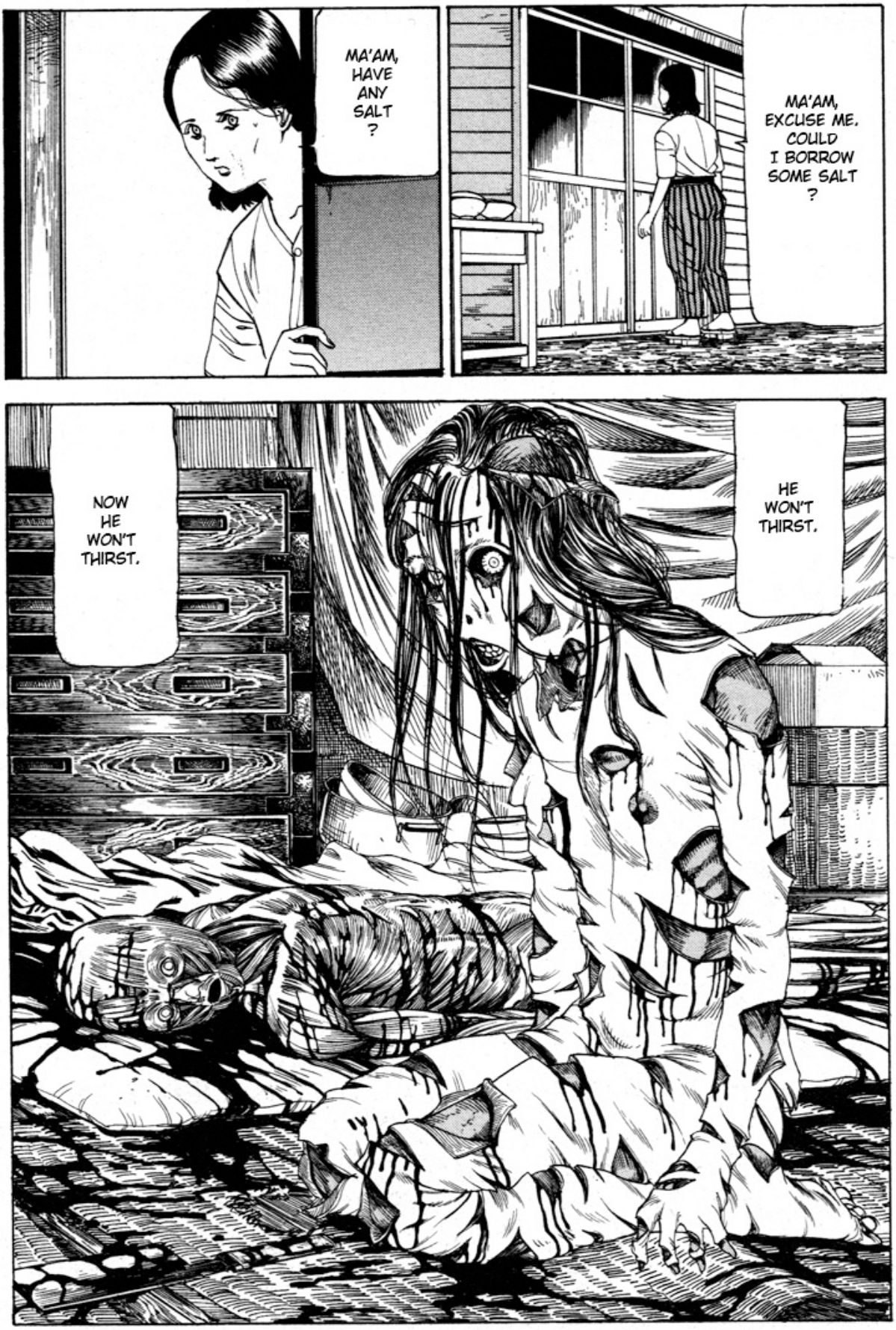
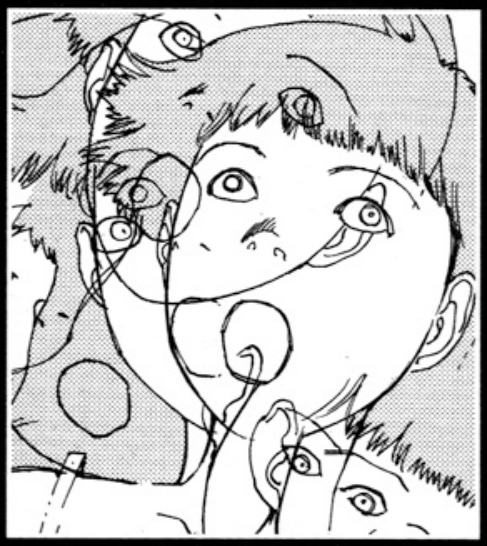
GNNN
ぐちゅ
PLUTCH
ぐちゅ
PLUTCH

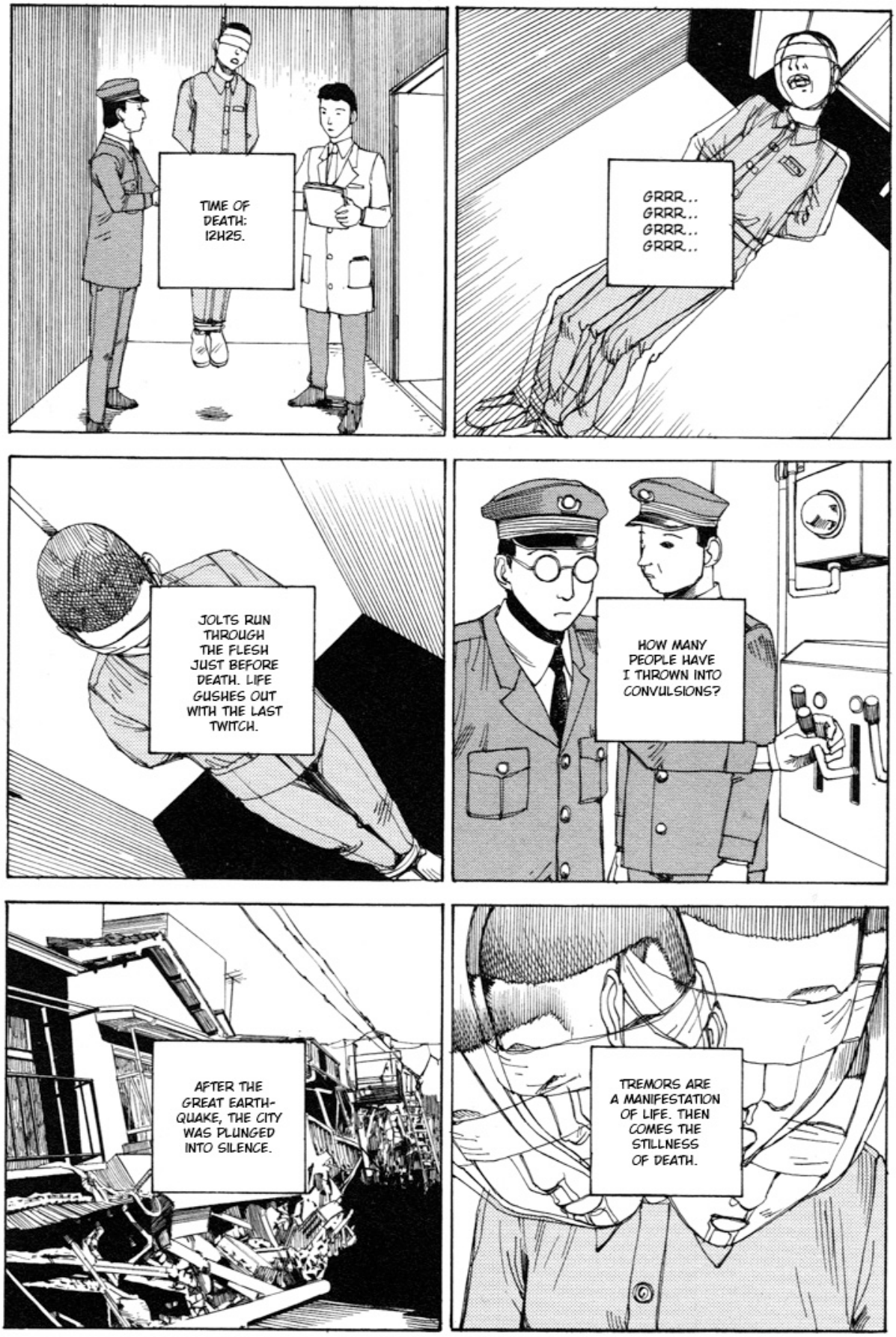

カチ
TAC
ボーン
DOOONG
DOOONG
DOOONG
DOOONG
THIRSTY !!
THIRSTY !!
THIRSTY !!


MA'AM, HAVE ANY SALT ?
MA'AM, EXCUSE ME. COULD I BORROW SOME SALT ?
NOW HE WON'T THIRST.
HE WON'T THIRST.

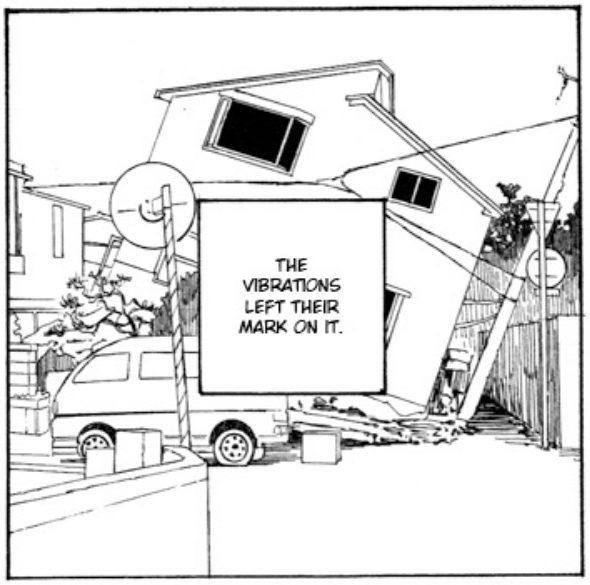
TREMORS



ANOTHER TREMOR ...
HMMM...
THE EARTH IS THROWN INTO CONVULSIONS.
THESE LITTLE TREMORS HAVEN'T CEASED EVER SINCE THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE HIT THE CITY.
BRRR.. BRRR..
KLANG ! KLANG !

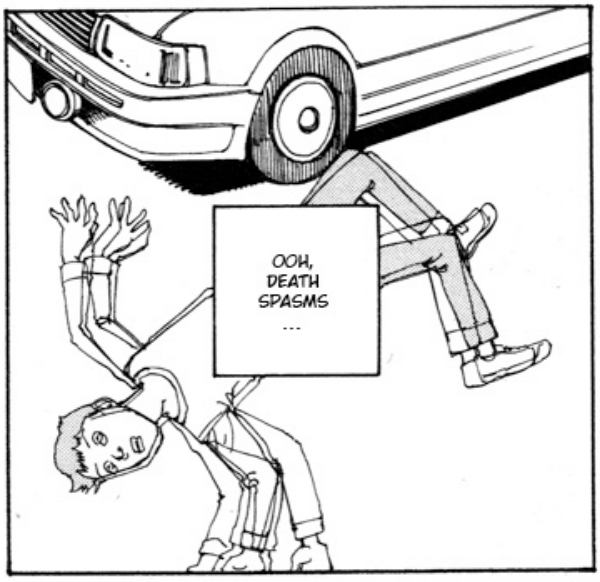

TIME OF DEATH: 12H25.
GRRR... GRRR... GRRR... GRRR...
JOLTS RUN THROUGH THE FLESH JUST BEFORE DEATH. LIFE GUSHES OUT WITH THE LAST TWITCH.
HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE I THROWN INTO CONVULSIONS?
AFTER THE GREAT EARTH-QUAKE, THE CITY WAS PLUNGED INTO SILENCE.
TREMORS ARE A MANIFESTATION OF LIFE. THEN COMES THE STILLNESS OF DEATH.

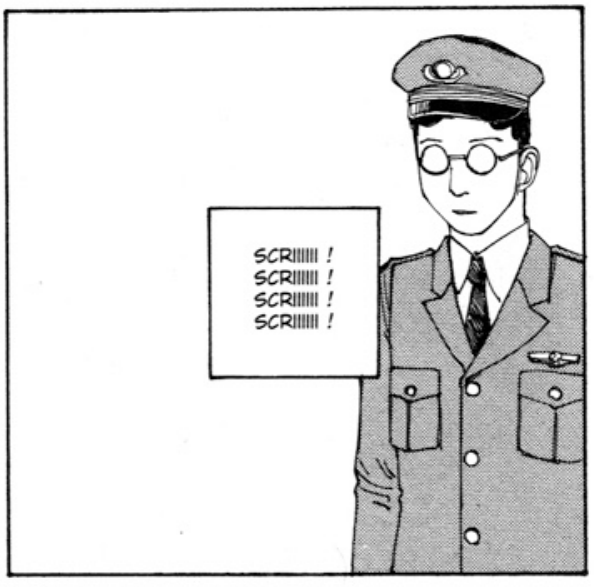
THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS ALSO HAVE BEEN SCARRED.

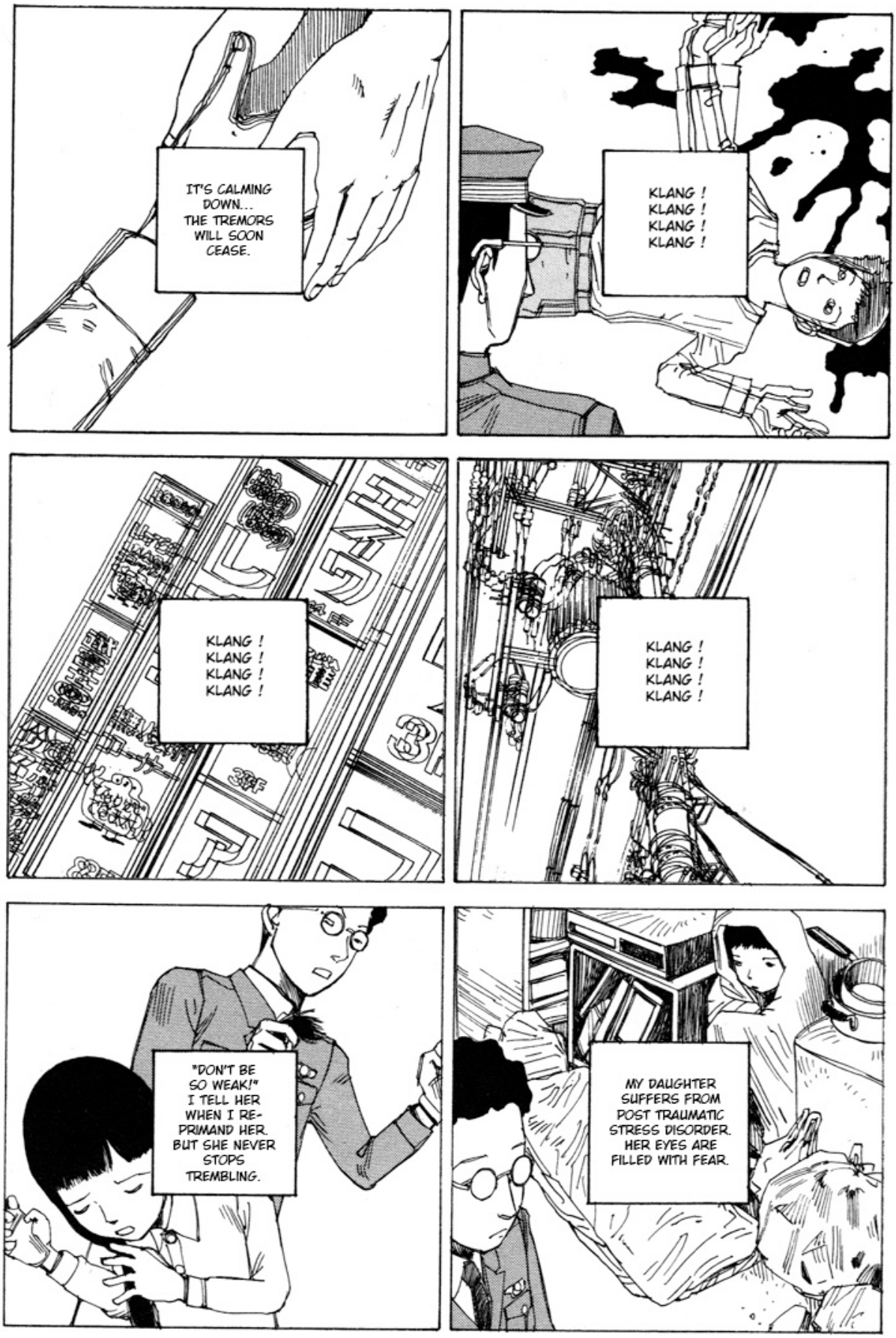

THE VIBRATIONS LEFT THEIR MARK ON IT.

AAAH... AMAZING! AMAZING!

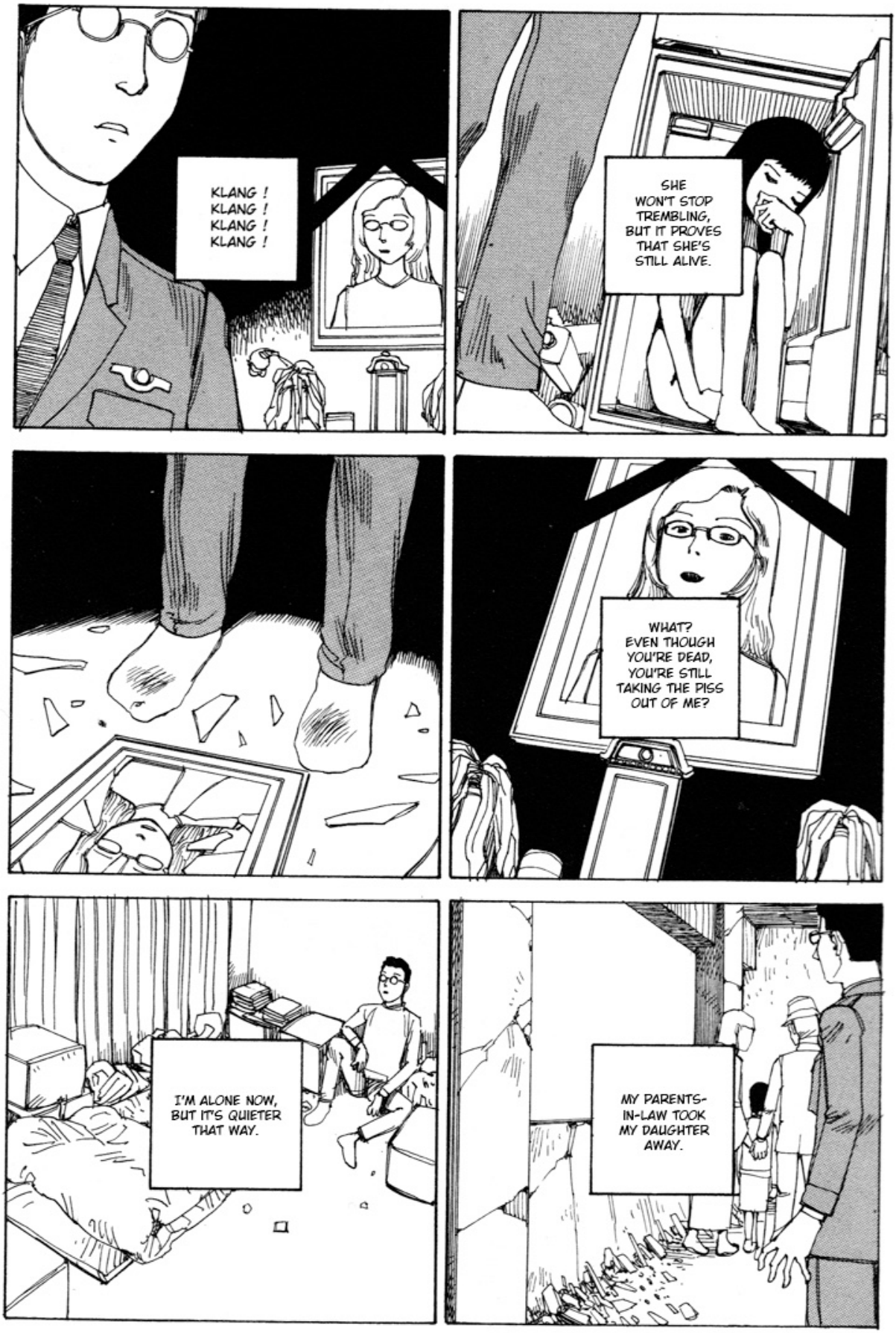
THIS ALCOHOLIC IS TREMBLING. ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE OF TREMORS!

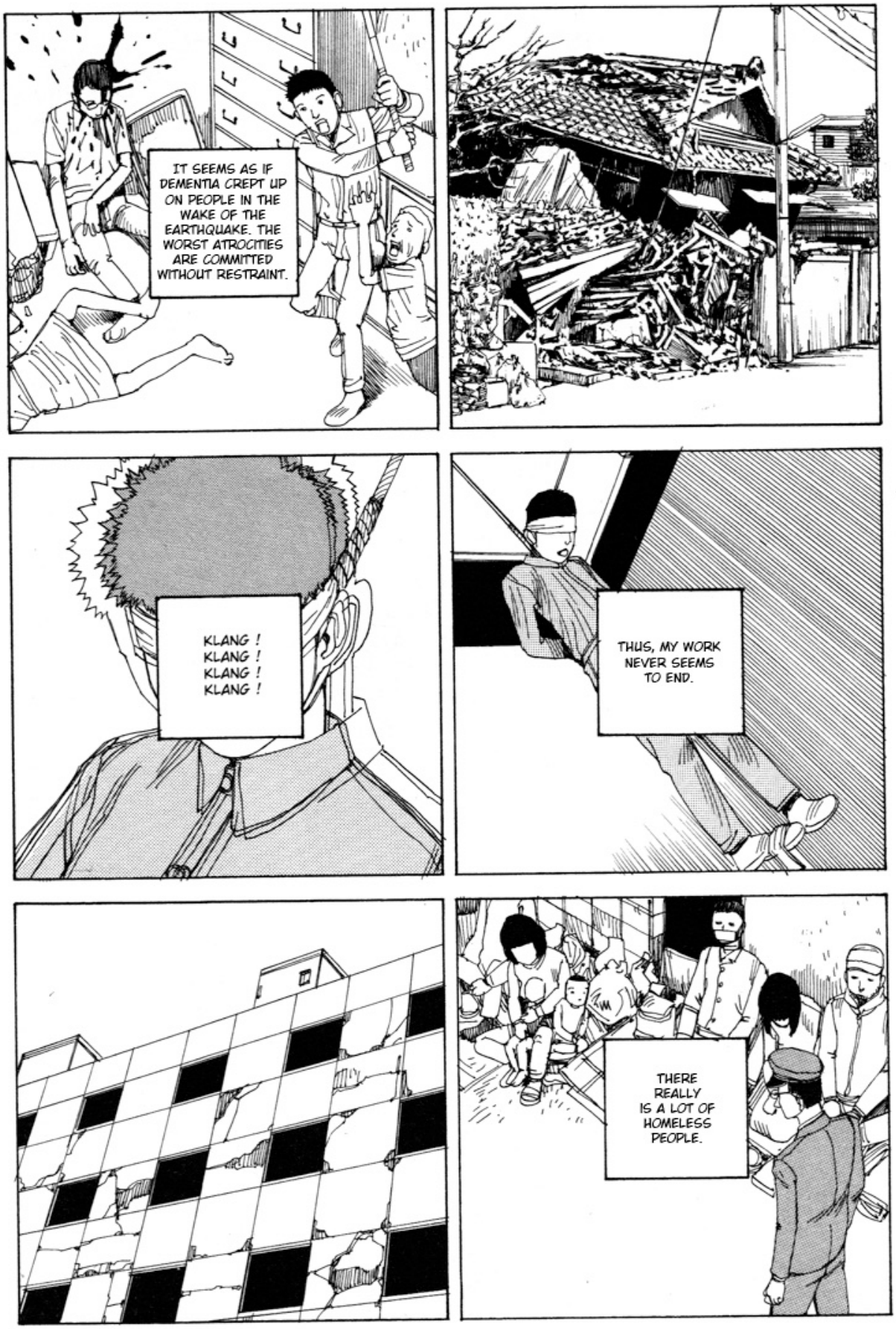

OOH, DEATH SPASMS ...


SCRIIIIII ! SCRIIIIII ! SCRIIIIII ! SCRIIIIII !


IT'S CALMING DOWN... THE TREMORS WILL SOON CEASE.
KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG !
KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG !
KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG !
"DON'T BE SO WEAK!" I TELL HER WHEN I RE-PRIMAND HER. BUT SHE NEVER STOPS TREMBLING.
MY DAUGHTER SUFFERS FROM POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER. HER EYES ARE FILLED WITH FEAR.

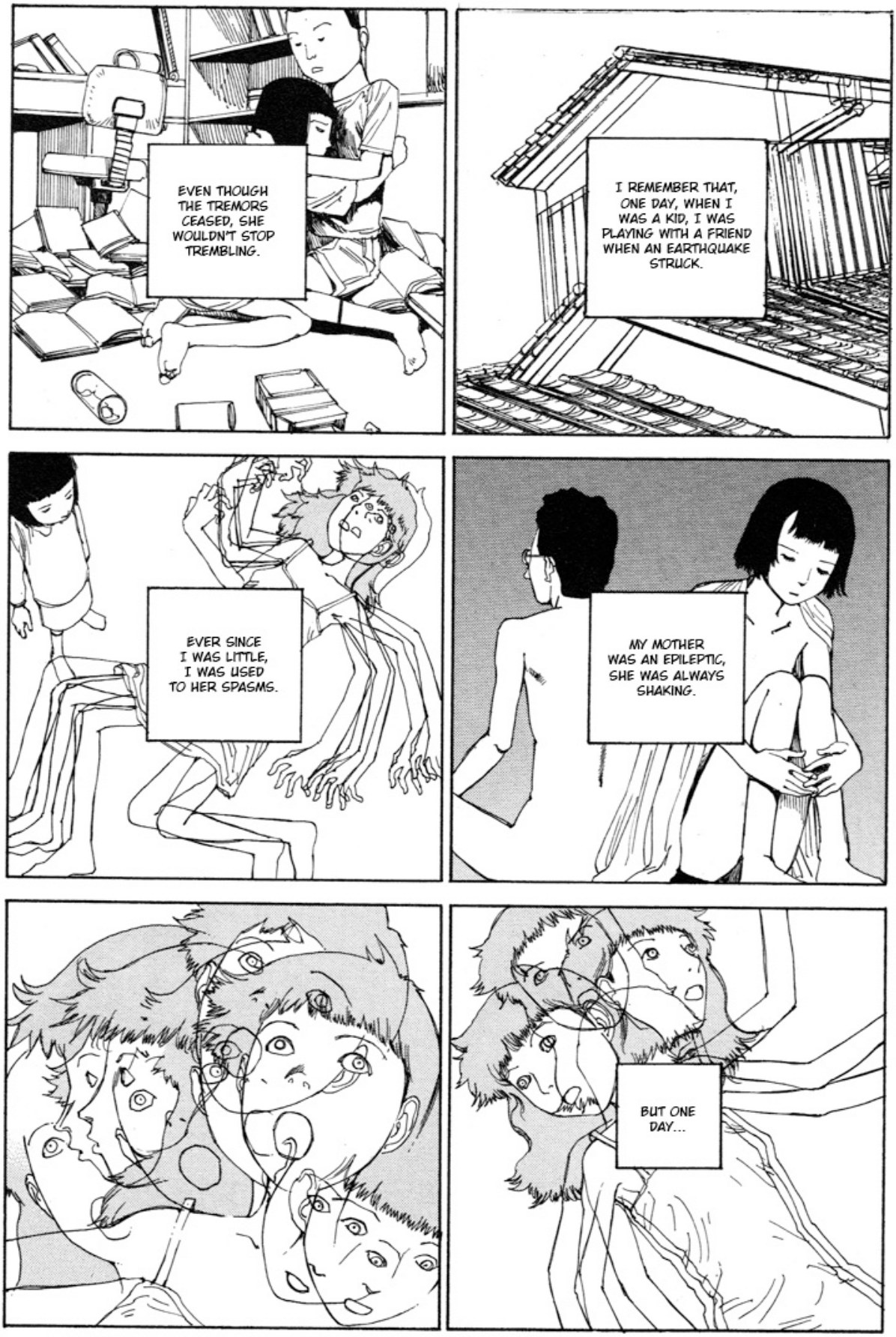
THEY'VE FOUND HER BODY AT HER LOVER'S RESIDENCE.
THIS PATHETIC WEAKNESS, SHE GOT IT FROM HER MOTHER.
THIS LITTLE SHITHEAD'S FACE REMINDS ME OF MY WIFE.
STUCK UNDER A PILLAR, SHE SUFFERED FOR TEN DAYS BEFORE DYING. THIS IS ONLY JUSTICE.
I LOCK YOU UP IN THE FREEZER, SO WHAT? IT'S ALSO PART OF YOUR EDUCATION!
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!

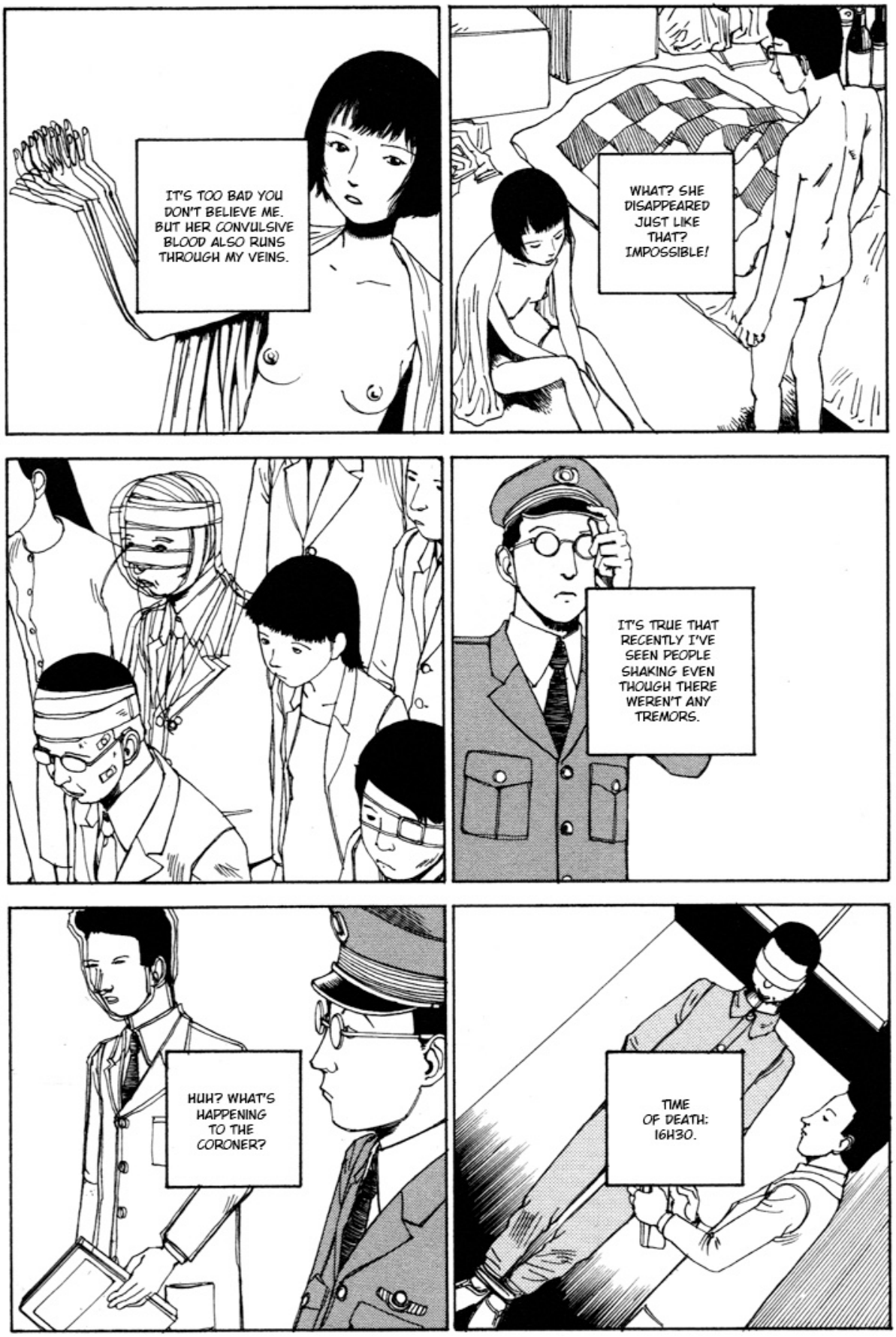

KLANG !
KLANG !
KLANG !
KLANG !
SHE WON'T STOP TREMBLING, BUT IT PROVES THAT SHE'S STILL ALIVE.
WHAT? EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE DEAD, YOU'RE STILL TAKING THE PISS OUT OF ME?
I'M ALONE NOW, BUT IT'S QUIETER THAT WAY.
MY PARENTS-IN-LAW TOOK MY DAUGHTER AWAY.


IT SEEMS AS IF DEMENTIA CREPT UP ON PEOPLE IN THE WAKE OF THE EARTHQUAKE. THE WORST ATROCITIES ARE COMMITTED WITHOUT RESTRAINT.
KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG !
THUS, MY WORK NEVER SEEMS TO END.
THERE REALLY IS A LOT OF HOMELESS PEOPLE.

I'VE GOT NOWHERE TO GO.
THANK YOU.
BUT... YOU'RE SHAKING!
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME, OKAY?

ARE YOU SURE?
B... BUT...
KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG ! KLANG !
IT'S SHAKING... IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...

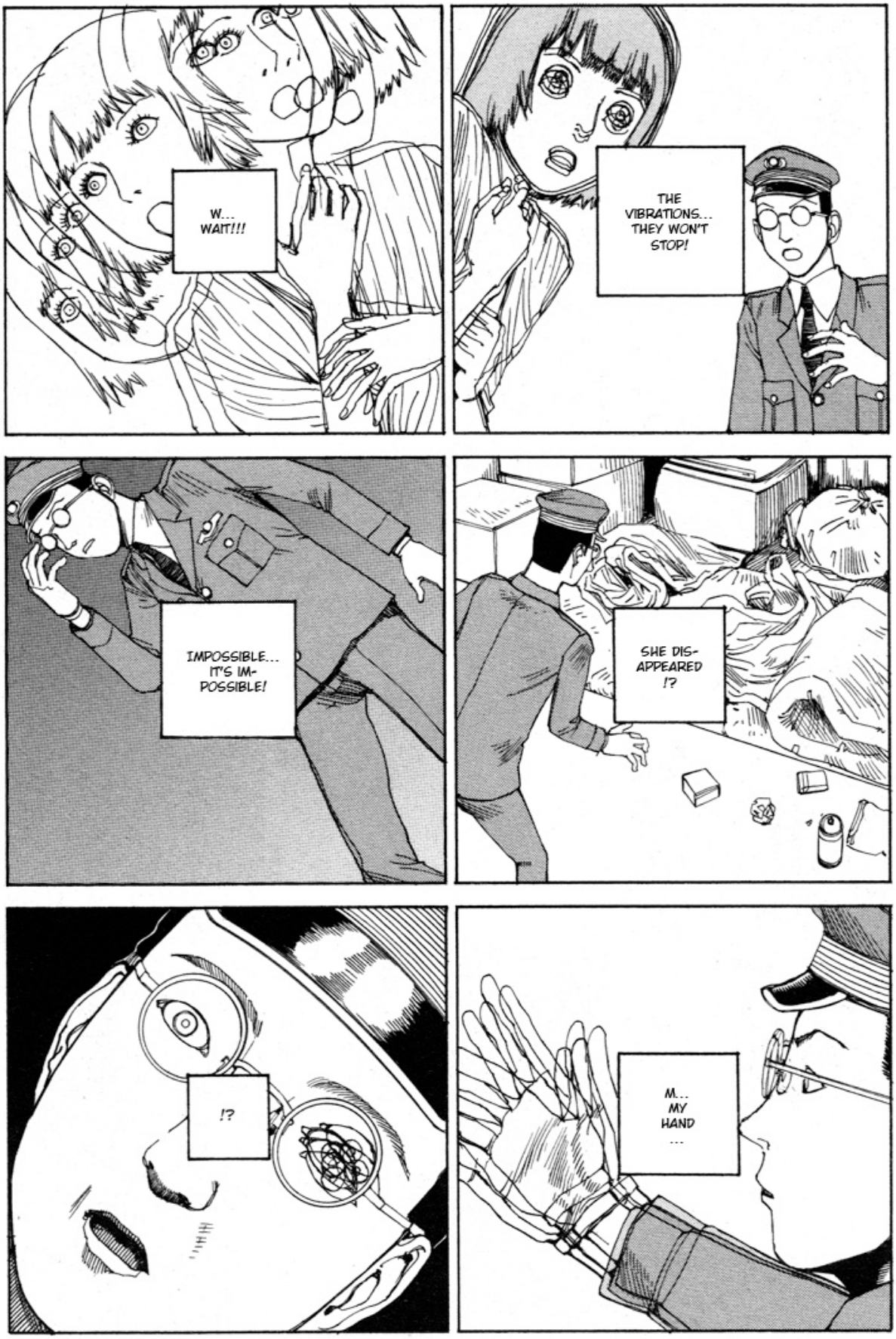

EVEN THOUGH THE TREMORS CEASED, SHE WOULDN'T STOP TREMBLING.
I REMEMBER THAT, ONE DAY, WHEN I WAS A KID, I WAS PLAYING WITH A FRIEND WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE STRUCK.
EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I WAS USED TO HER SPASMS.
MY MOTHER WAS AN EPILEPTIC, SHE WAS ALWAYS SHAKING.
BUT ONE DAY...


IT'S TOO BAD YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME. BUT HER CONVULSIVE BLOOD ALSO RUNS THROUGH MY VEINS.
WHAT? SHE DISAPPEARED JUST LIKE THAT? IMPOSSIBLE!
IT'S TRUE THAT RECENTLY I'VE SEEN PEOPLE SHAKING EVEN THOUGH THERE WEREN'T ANY TREMORS.
HUH? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE CORONER?
TIME OF DEATH: 16H30.

WAS HE INFECTED BY THE CONDEMNED'S TWITCHING?
HIS BODY MUST HAVE DISSOLVED BECAUSE OF THE OVERWHELMING VIBRATIONS.
WHAT? THE CORONER DISAPPEARED?
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO VIBRATE.
THE TREMORS ARE MAKING THEMSELVES SCARCE, THESE DAYS.

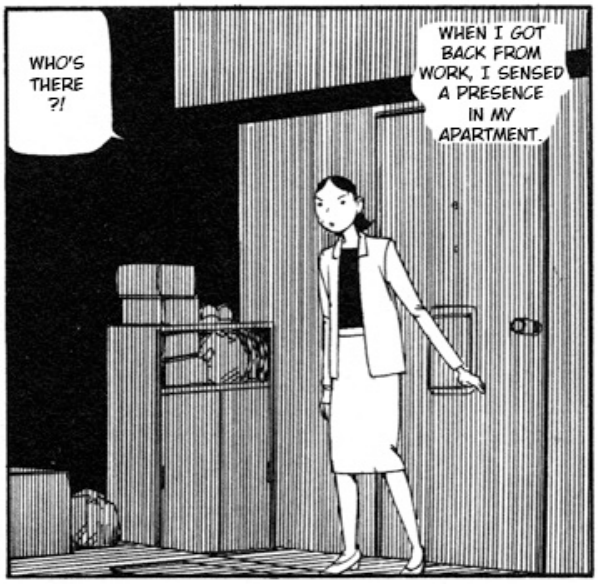
?
TELL ME YOU WON'T EVAPORATE TOO!
SHE DISAPPEARED!? I MUST BE DREAMING!
S... STOP! STOP SHAKING!
HEY!?

!?
HE'S SHAKING WITH FEAR.
STOP! STOP SHAKING!
HE... HE DISAPPEARED ?!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?!
AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE HITS A CITY, COULD IT BE THAT PEOPLE DISAPPEAR BECAUSE OF THE VIBRATIONS?


W...
WAIT!!!
THE VIBRATIONS... THEY WON'T STOP!
IMPOSSIBLE... IT'S IM-POSSIBLE!
SHE DIS-APPEARED !?
!?
M... MY HAND ...

COLLAPSE

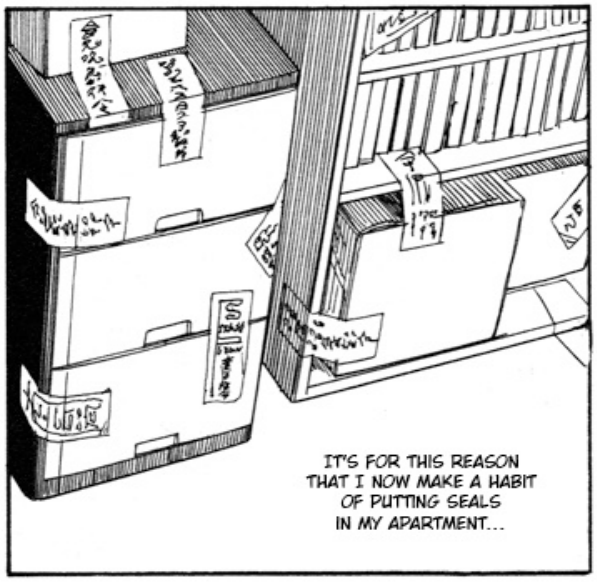
HERE'S PROOF ...
I'M CERTAIN THAT SOMEONE WAS HERE.

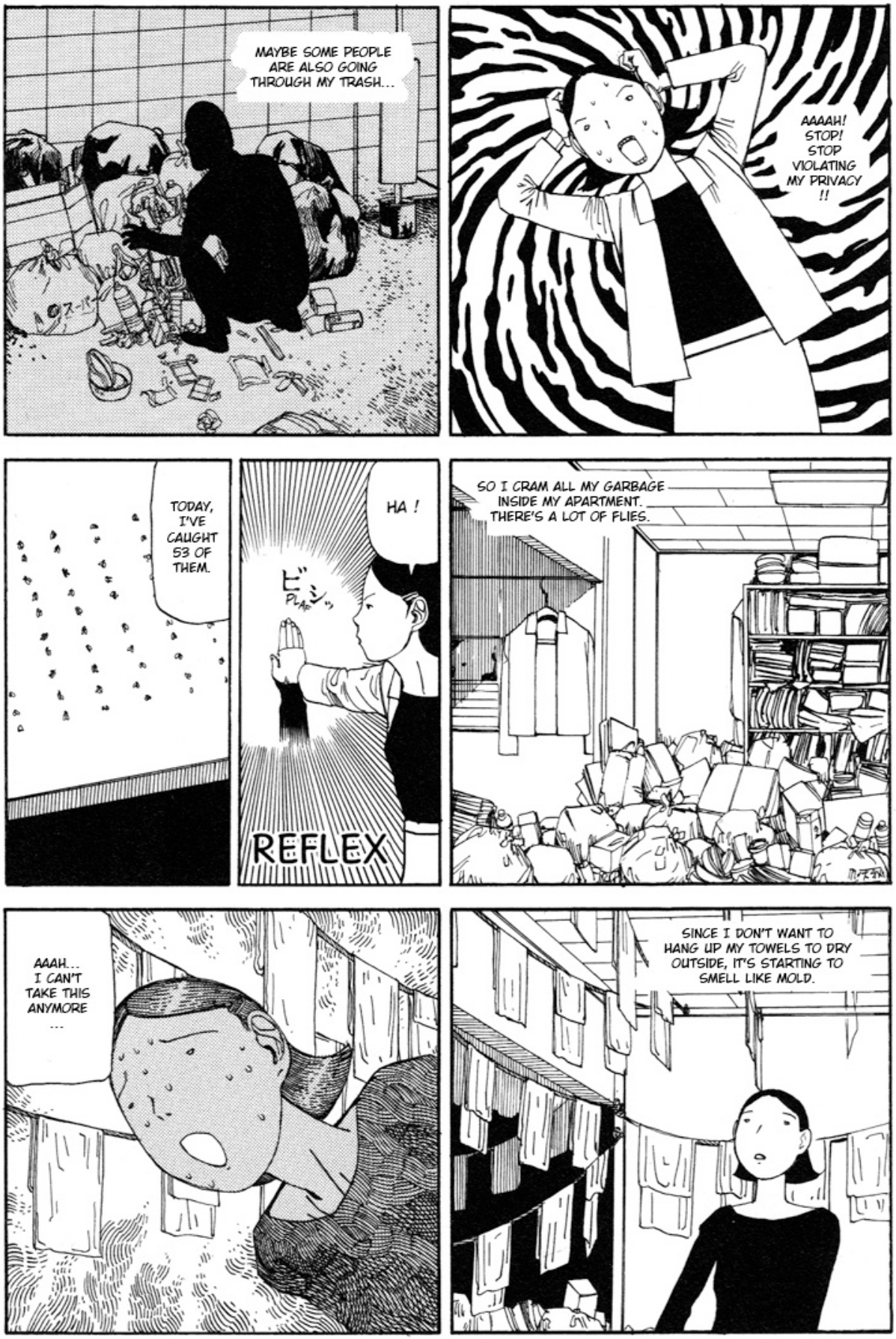

WHO'S THERE ?!
WHEN I GOT BACK FROM WORK, I SENSED A PRESENCE IN MY APARTMENT.

SOMEONE WENT THROUGH MY STUFF WHILE I WAS GONE!!
HMM... JUST THINKING ABOUT IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

THESE OBJECTS AREN'T WHERE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.

WHEN A RADIO IS PUT NEAR A MICROPHONE, THERE'S STATIC.
...AND LOOKING FOR HIDDEN MICRO-PHONES.


IT'S FOR THIS REASON THAT I NOW MAKE A HABIT OF PUTTING SEALS IN MY APARTMENT...

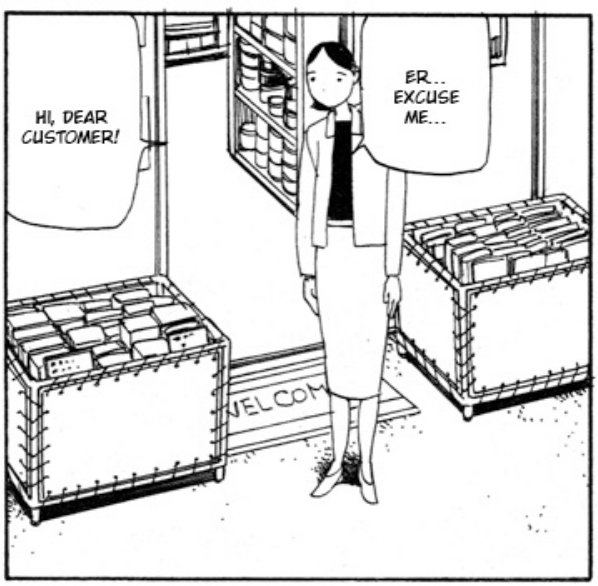

MAYBE SOME PEOPLE ARE ALSO GOING THROUGH MY TRASH...
AAAAH! STOP! STOP VIOLATING MY PRIVACY !!
TODAY, I'VE CAUGHT 53 OF THEM.
HA !
ビシッ
REFLEX
SO I CRAM ALL MY GARBAGE INSIDE MY APARTMENT. THERE'S A LOT OF FLIES.
AAAH... I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE ...
SINCE I DON'T WANT TO HANG UP MY TOWELS TO DRY OUTSIDE, IT'S STARTING TO SMELL LIKE MOLD.

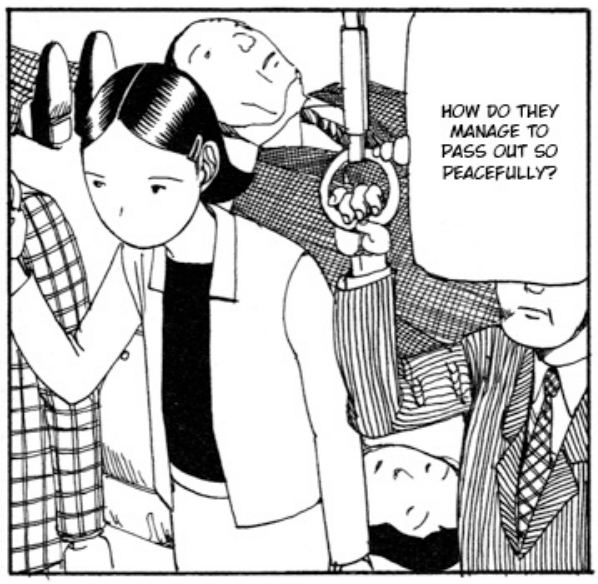
I COL-
LAPSE
...
BADAM
バタン
I FEEL
SO
WEAK...
AAAH...
MY HEAD IS
SPINNING,
SPINNING,
SPINNING...
SEE YOU
TONIGHT!
BUT THE
NEXT DAY,
I HAVE TO
GET UP AND
GO TO
WORK.
IT WOULD BE
SO SIMPLE...
TO STAY LIKE
THIS, LYING
DOWN ON
THE GROUND!
BZZZ
I'M SO JEALOUS...
HE'S USING ALL
HIS WILLPOWER
TO STAY LIKE THIS,
ON THE GROUND.
AH,
THERE'S
SOMEONE
LYING
ON THE
GROUND!

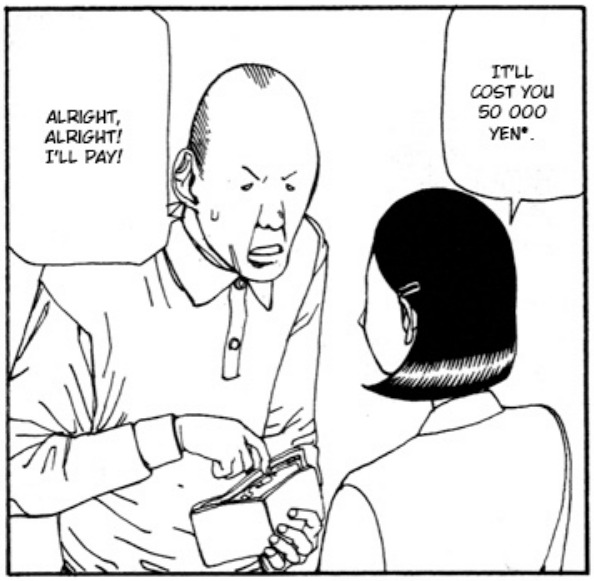
AH... THERE ARE OTHERS!

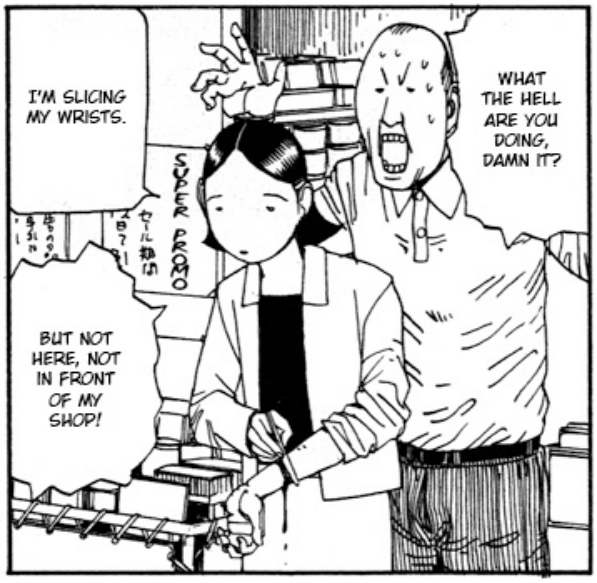
IT'S TRUE THAT THESE DAYS, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO FALL TO THE GROUND.

WHAT AMAZING DETERMINATION! I HAVE TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE!

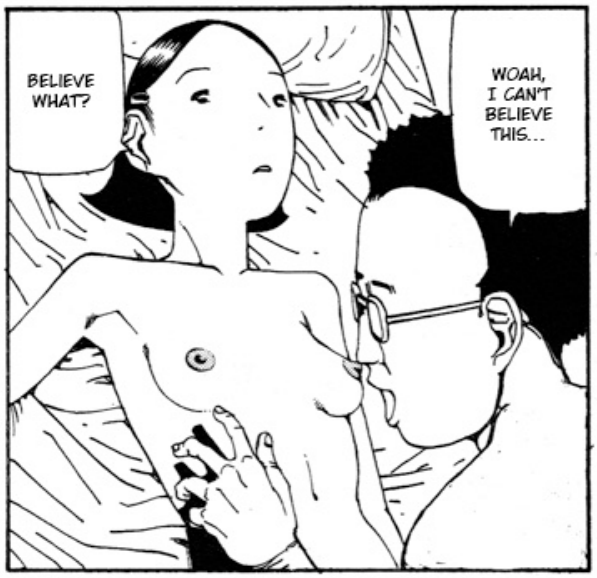

HI, DEAR CUSTOMER!
ER... EXCUSE ME...

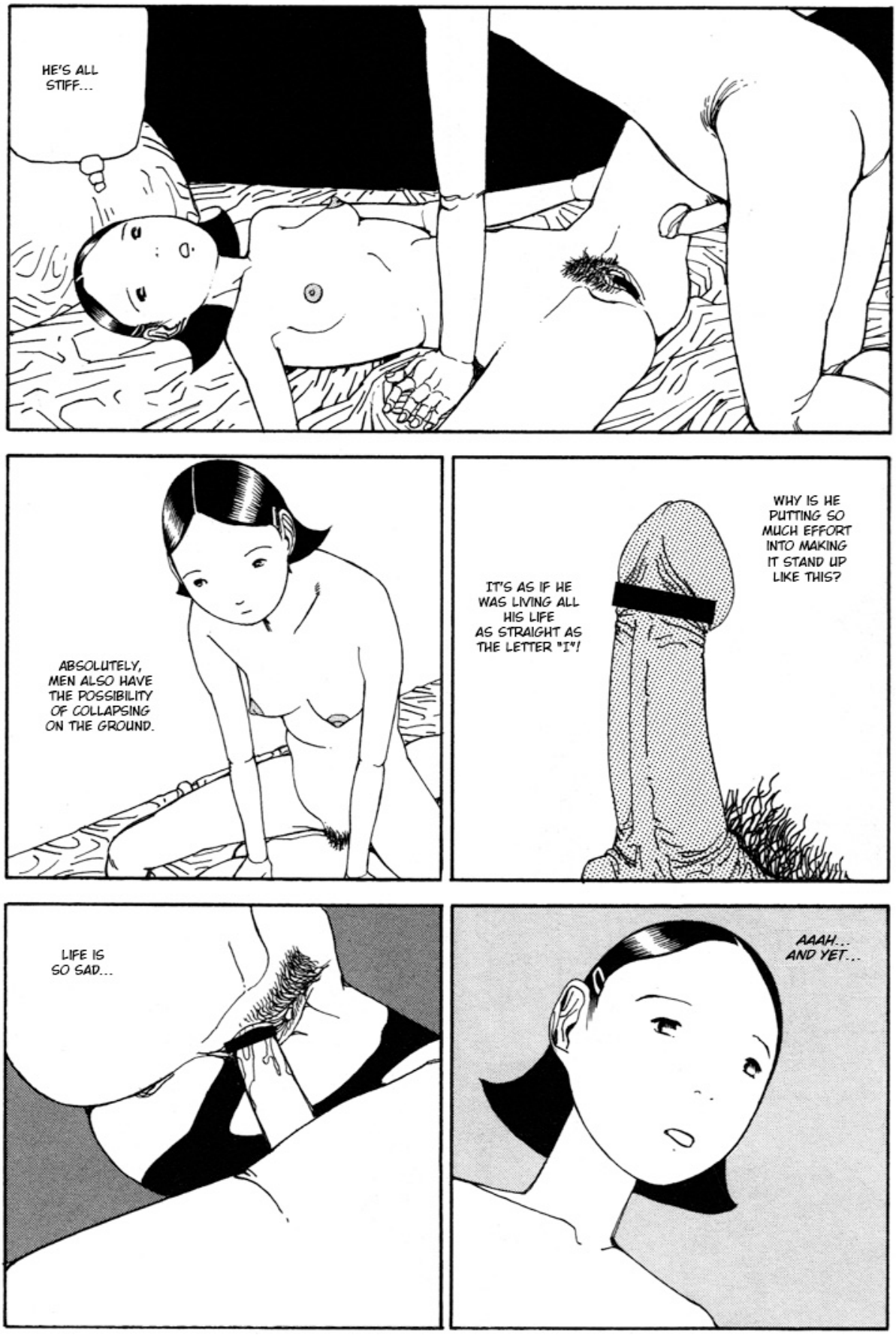

HOW DO THEY MANAGE TO PASS OUT SO PEACEFULLY?



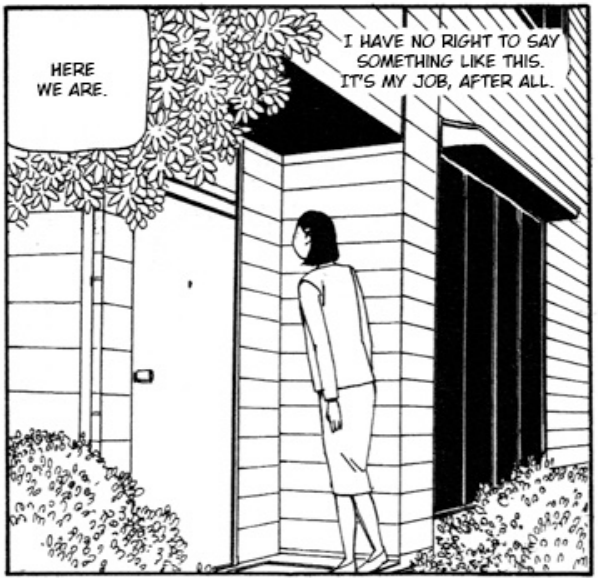


*APPROXIMATELY 450 EUROS

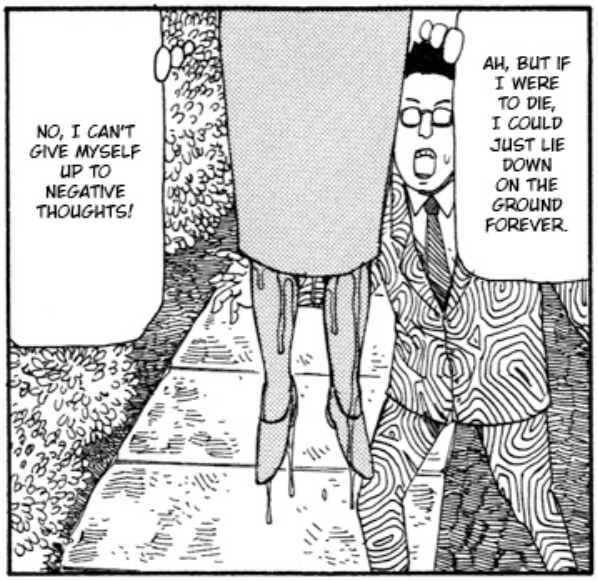



HE'S ALL STIFF...
ABSOLUTELY, MEN ALSO HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF COLLAPSING ON THE GROUND.
IT'S AS IF HE WAS LIVING ALL HIS LIFE AS STRAIGHT AS THE LETTER "I"!
WHY IS HE PUTTING SO MUCH EFFORT INTO MAKING IT STAND UP LIKE THIS?
LIFE IS SO SAD...
AAAH... AND YET...

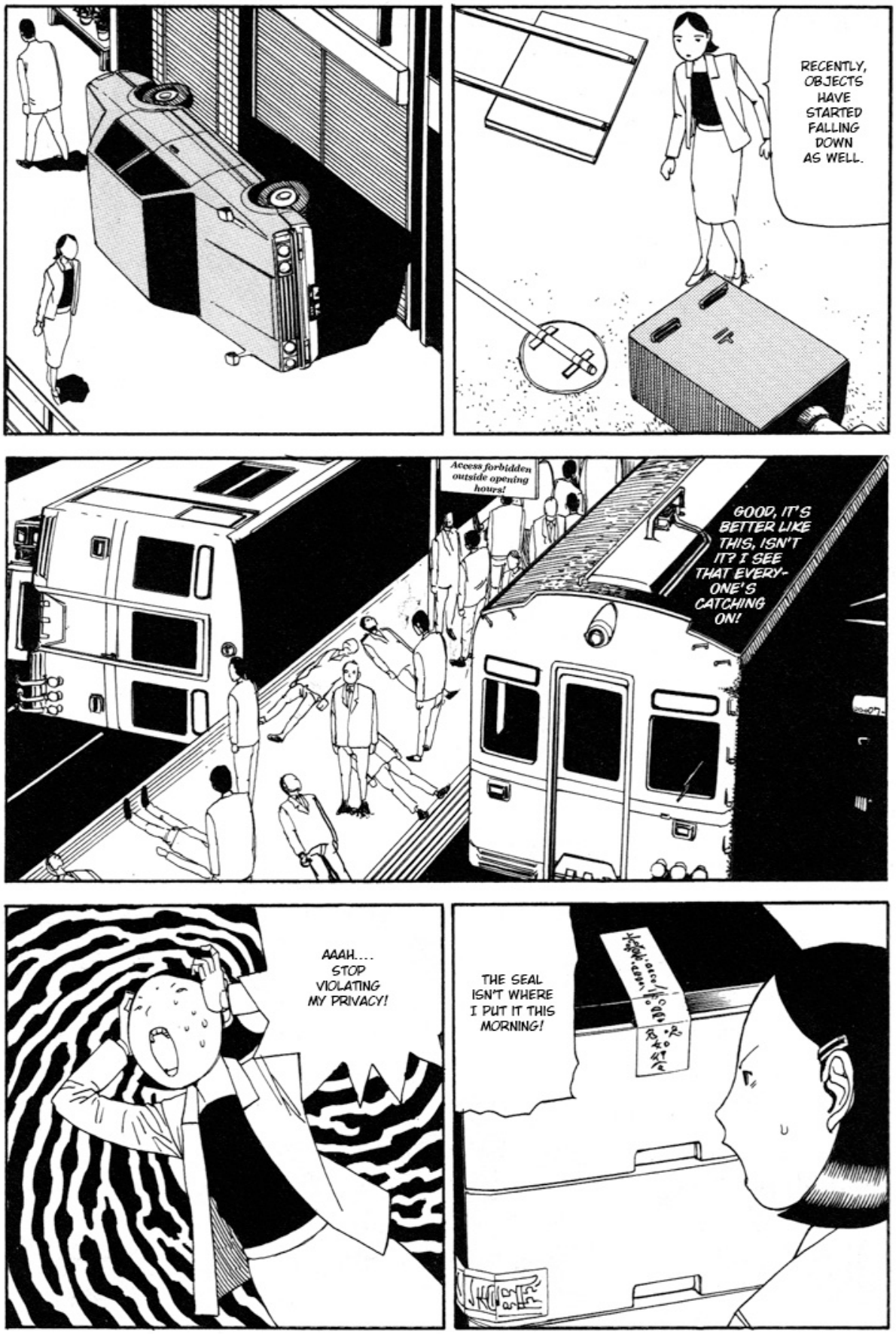
THIS METHOD IS VERY RISKY. IF I MESS UP, I'LL DIE.

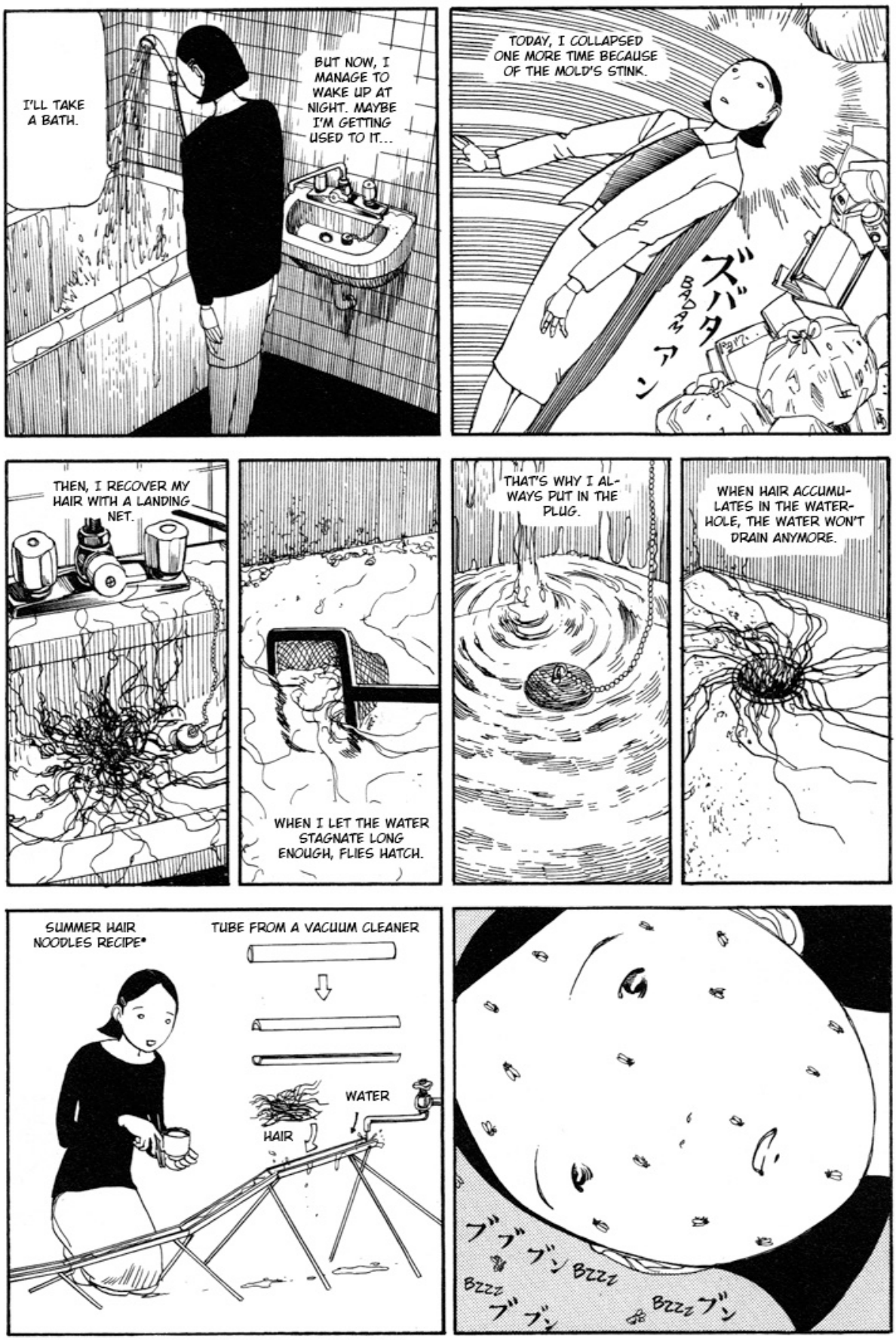

HERE WE ARE.
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS. IT'S MY JOB, AFTER ALL.

WITH THIS, I CAN KEEP GOING FOR A MONTH...
BUT MY JOB SURE IS INSIGNIFI-CANT...


NO, I CAN'T GIVE MYSELF UP TO NEGATIVE THOUGHTS!
AH, BUT IF I WERE TO DIE, I COULD JUST LIE DOWN ON THE GROUND FOREVER.

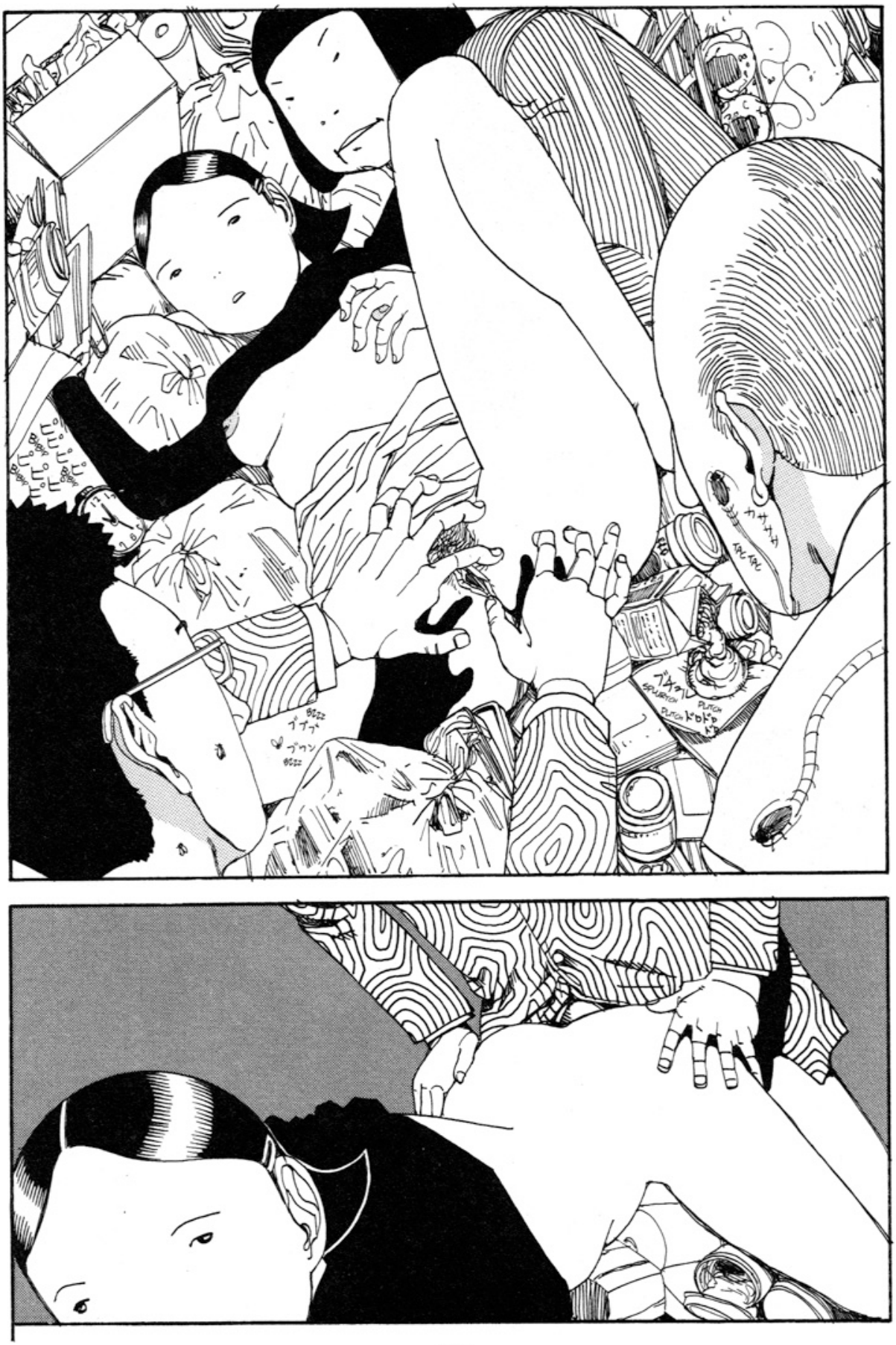
THERE ARE EVEN MORE PEOPLE LYING ON THE GROUND, TODAY.

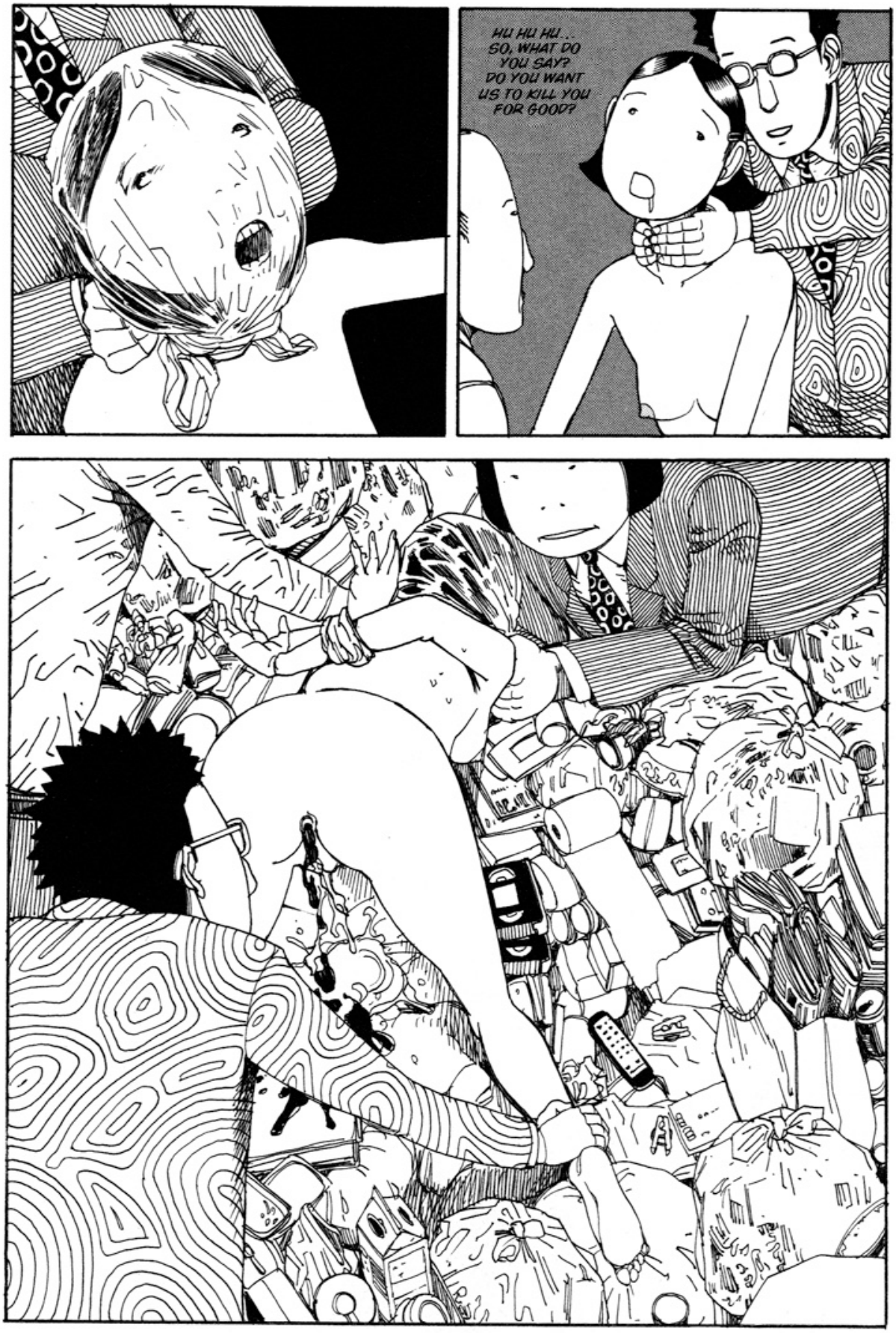

RECENTLY, OBJECTS HAVE STARTED FALLING DOWN AS WELL.
Access forbidden outside opening hours!
GOOD, IT'S BETTER LIKE THIS, ISN'T IT? I SEE THAT EVERY-ONE'S CATCHING ON!
AAAH.... STOP VIOLATING MY PRIVACY!
THE SEAL ISN'T WHERE I PUT IT THIS MORNING!

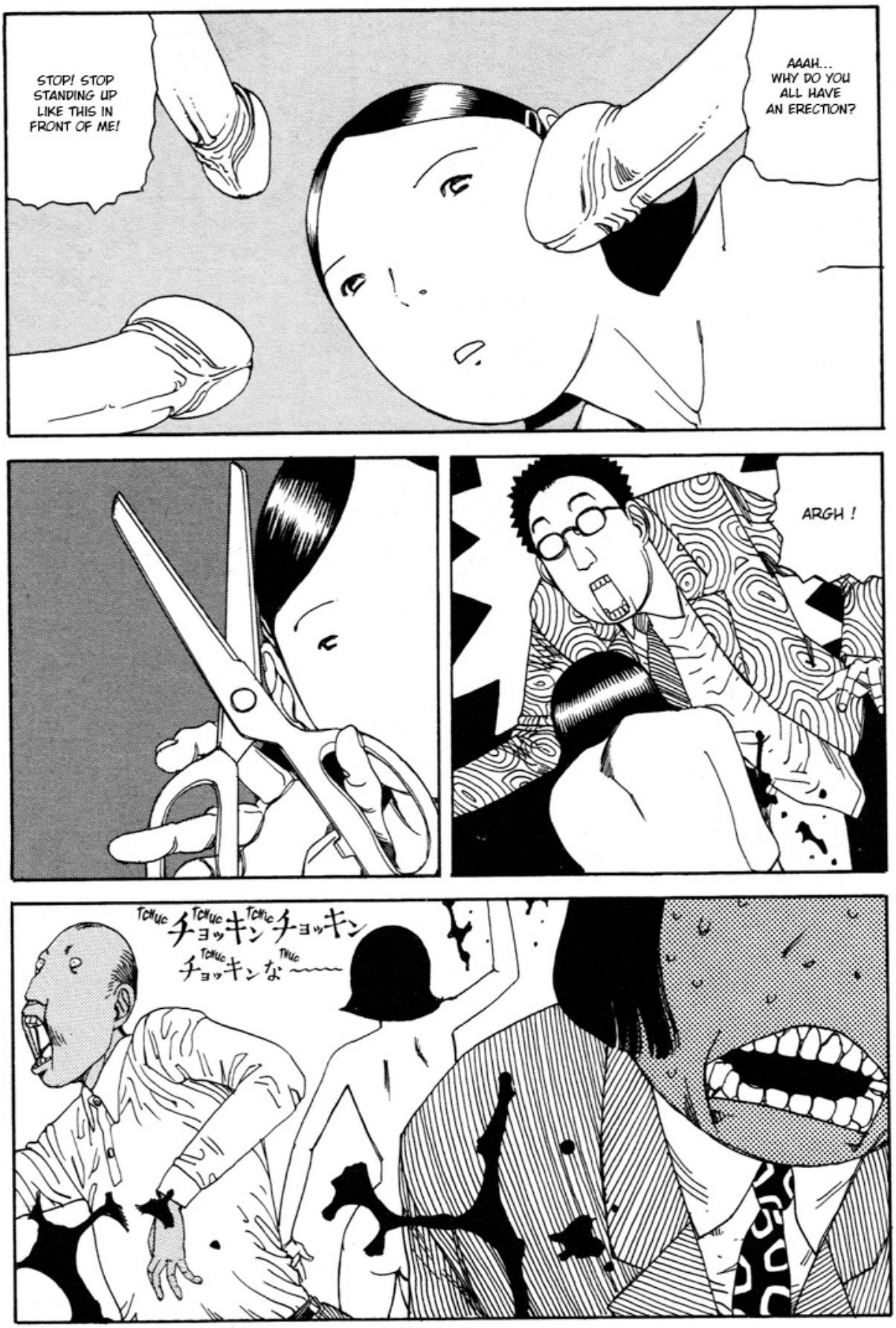

I'LL TAKE A BATH.
BUT NOW, I MANAGE TO WAKE UP AT NIGHT. MAYBE I'M GETTING USED TO IT...
TODAY, I COLLAPSED ONE MORE TIME BECAUSE OF THE MOLD'S STINK.
ズバタ
BADA
アン
THEN, I RECOVER MY HAIR WITH A LANDING NET.
WHEN I LET THE WATER STAGNATE LONG ENOUGH, FLIES HATCH.
THAT'S WHY I ALWAYS PUT IN THE PLUG.
WHEN HAIR ACCUMULATES IN THE WATER-HOLE, THE WATER WON'T DRAIN ANYMORE.
SUMMER HAIR NOODLES RECIPE*
TUBE FROM A VACUUM CLEANER
WATER
HAIR
ブブブン Bzzz
Bzzz ブブン
Bzzz ブン

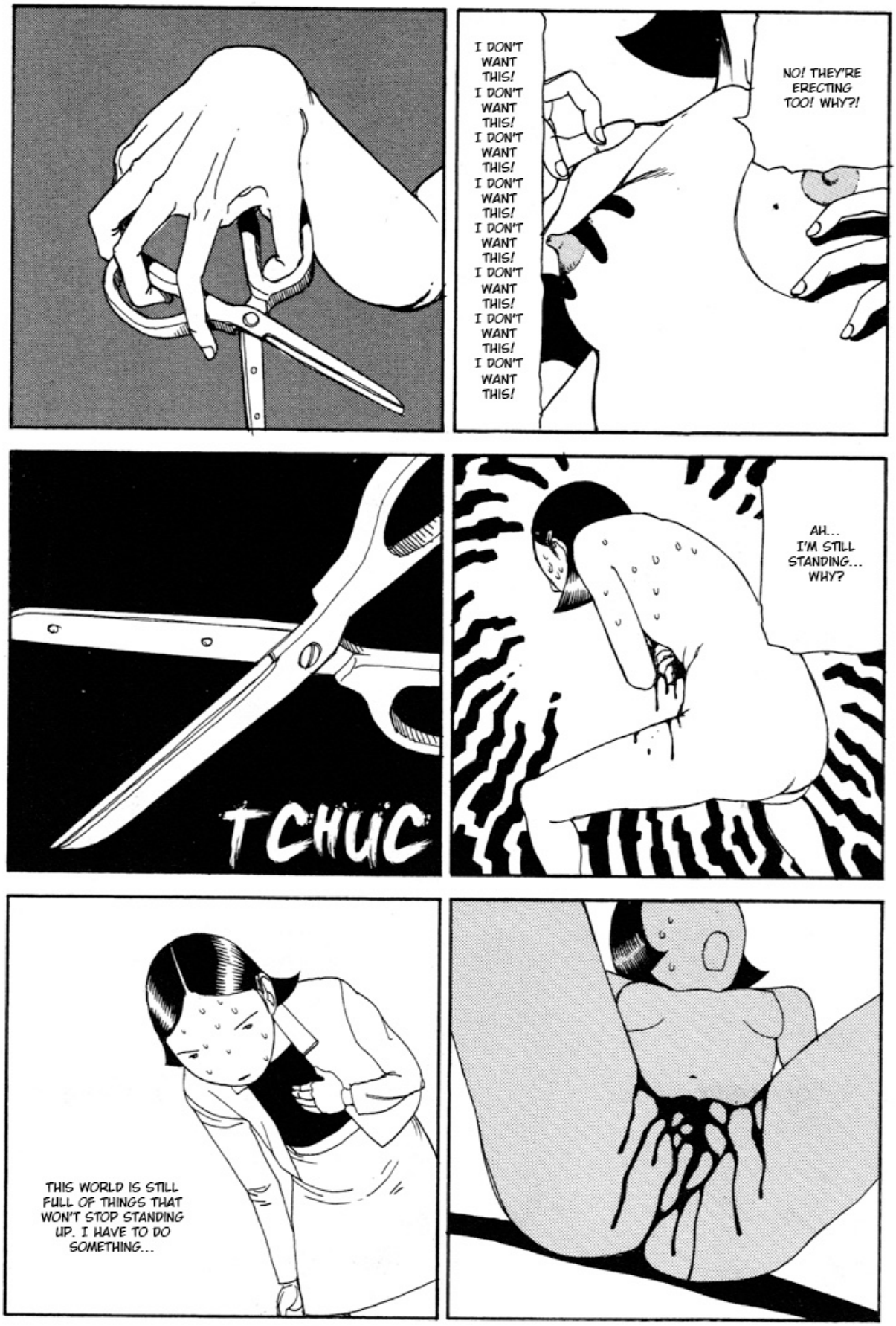
*THIS DEVICE IS NORMALLY USED TO SAVOUR COLD NOODLES

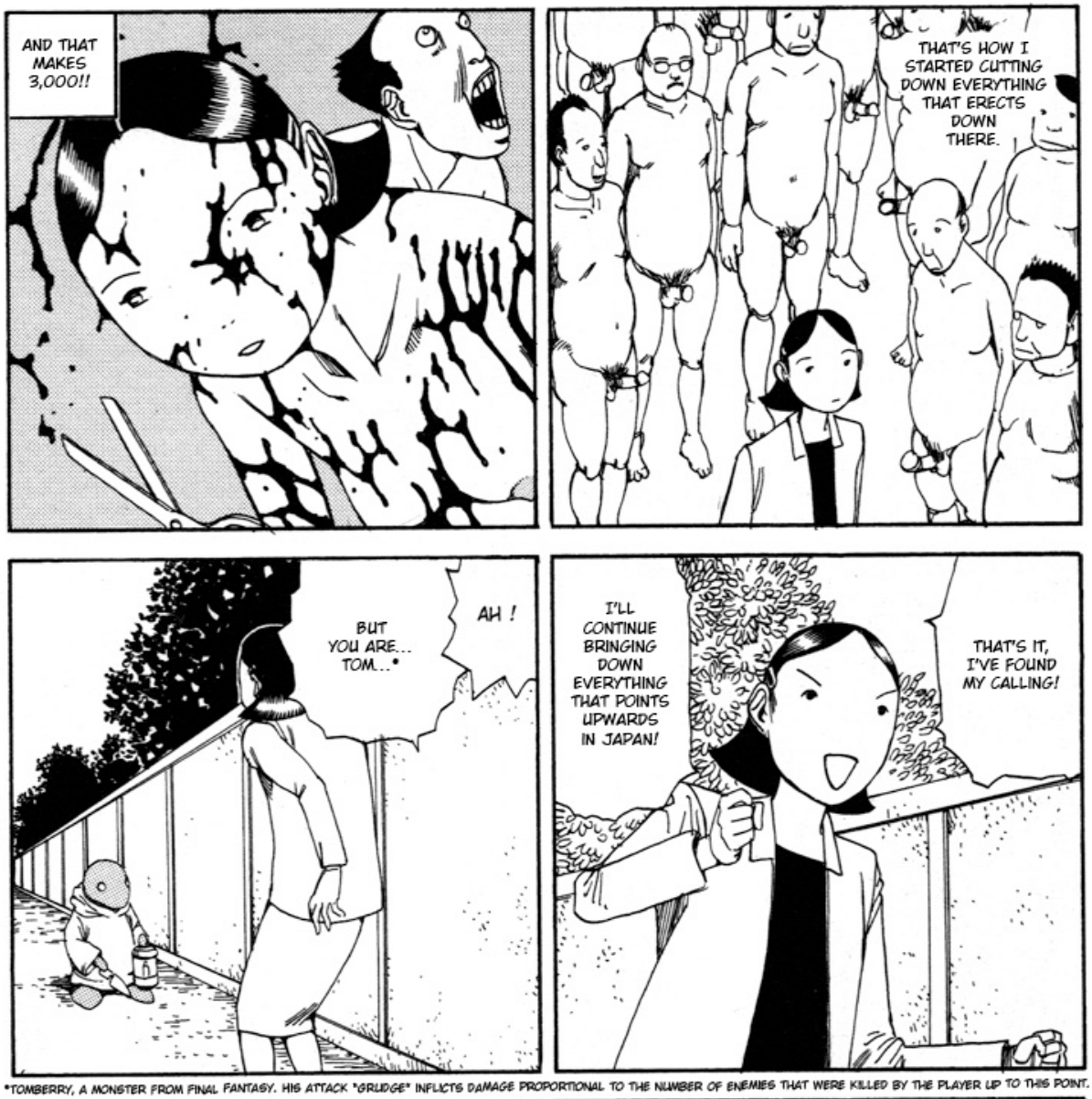
I'LL PASS OUT!
AAAH... THEY'RE CLOGGING MY THROAT... I CAN'T BREATHE...


SPURTCH
PUSCH

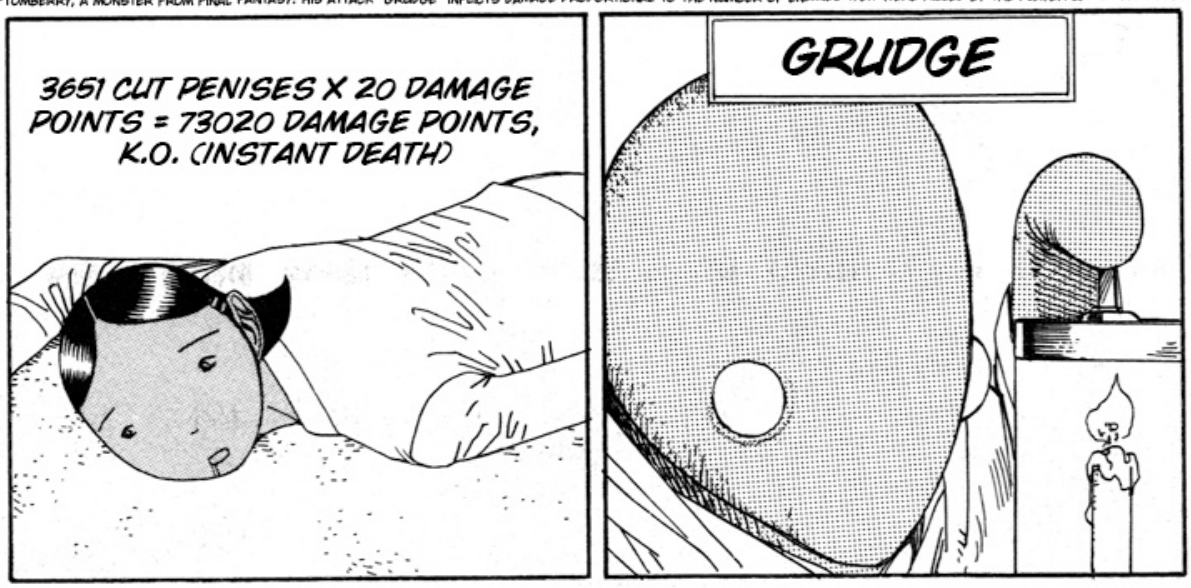

HU HU HU..
SO, WHAT DO
YOU SAY?
DO YOU WANT
US TO KILL YOU
FOR GOOD?


STOP! STOP STANDING UP LIKE THIS IN FRONT OF ME!
AAAH... WHY DO YOU ALL HAVE AN ERECTION?
ARGH !
Tchuc チョッキン Tchuc チョッキン Tchuc チョッキン な Tchuc

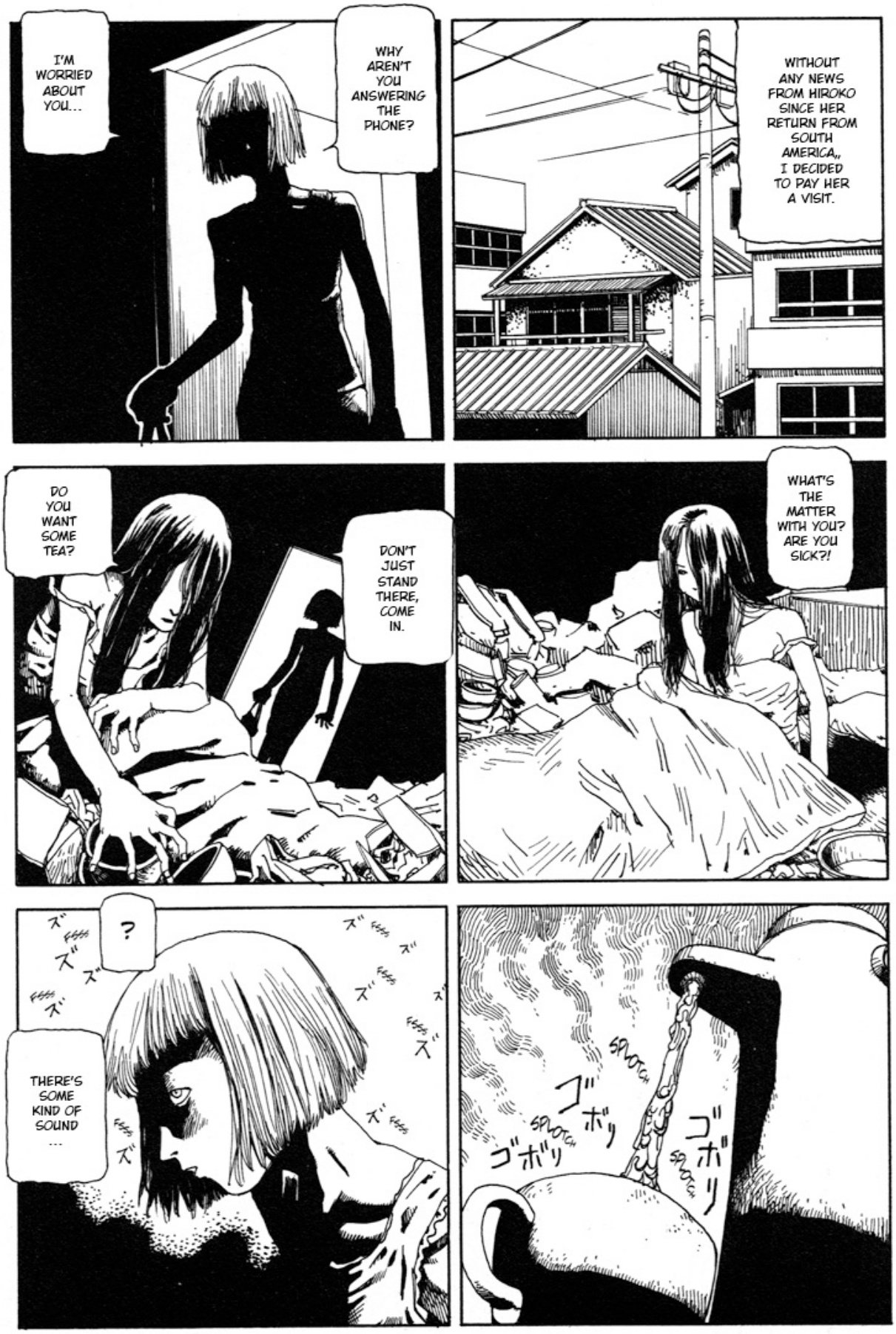

I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS! I DON'T WANT THIS!
NO! THEY'RE ERECTING TOO! WHY?!
TCHUC
AH... I'M STILL STANDING... WHY?
THIS WORLD IS STILL FULL OF THINGS THAT WON'T STOP STANDING UP. I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING...

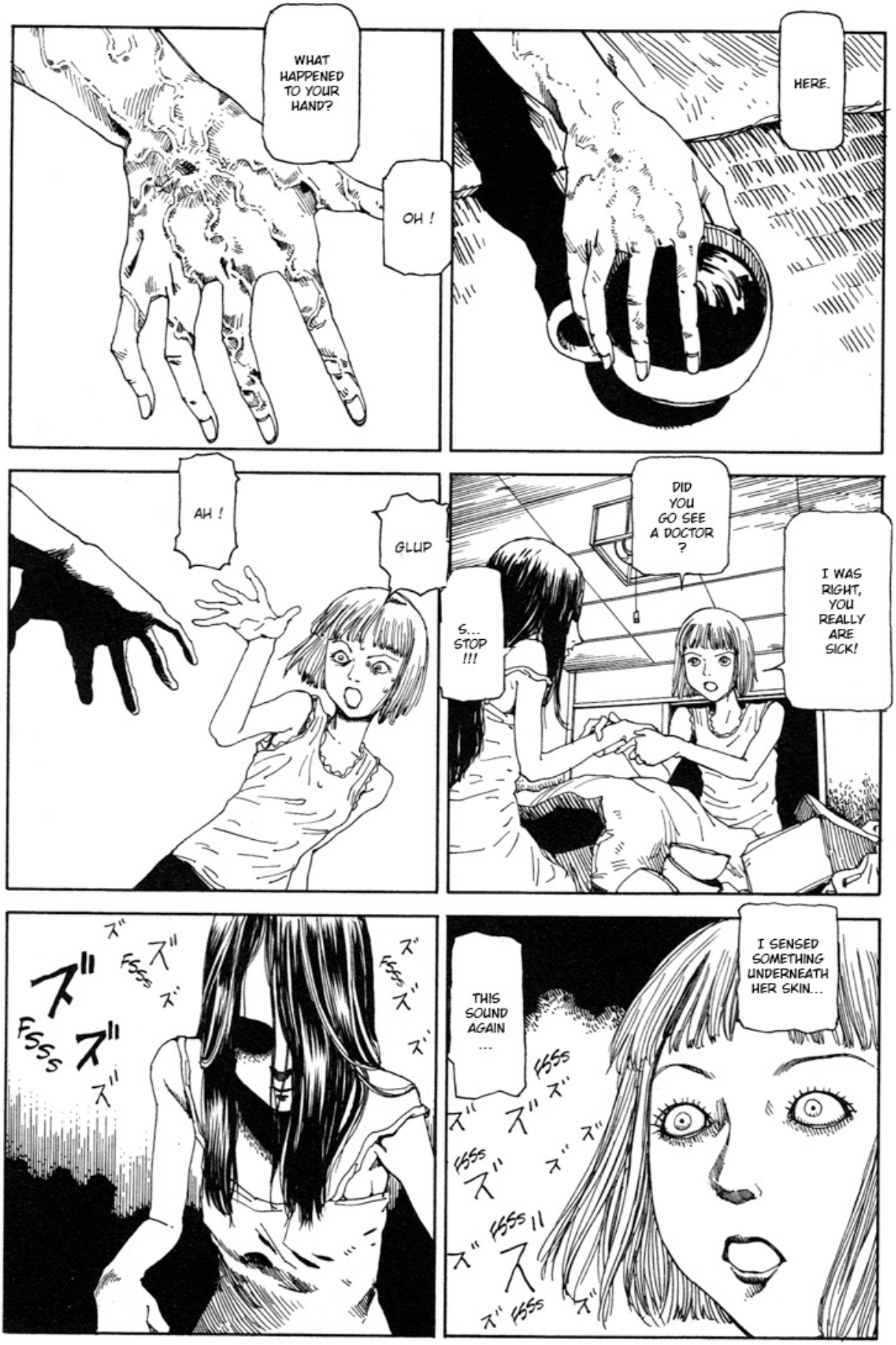

AND THAT MAKES 3,000!!
THAT'S HOW I STARTED CUTTING DOWN EVERYTHING THAT ERECTS DOWN THERE.
AH !
BUT YOU ARE... TOM...*
I'LL CONTINUE BRINGING DOWN EVERYTHING THAT POINTS UPWARDS IN JAPAN!
THAT'S IT, I'VE FOUND MY CALLING!

*TOMBERRY, A MONSTER FROM FINAL FANTASY. HIS ATTACK "GRUDGE" INFLICTS DAMAGE PROPORTIONAL TO THE NUMBER OF ENEMIES THAT WERE KILLED BY THE PLAYER UP TO THIS POINT.

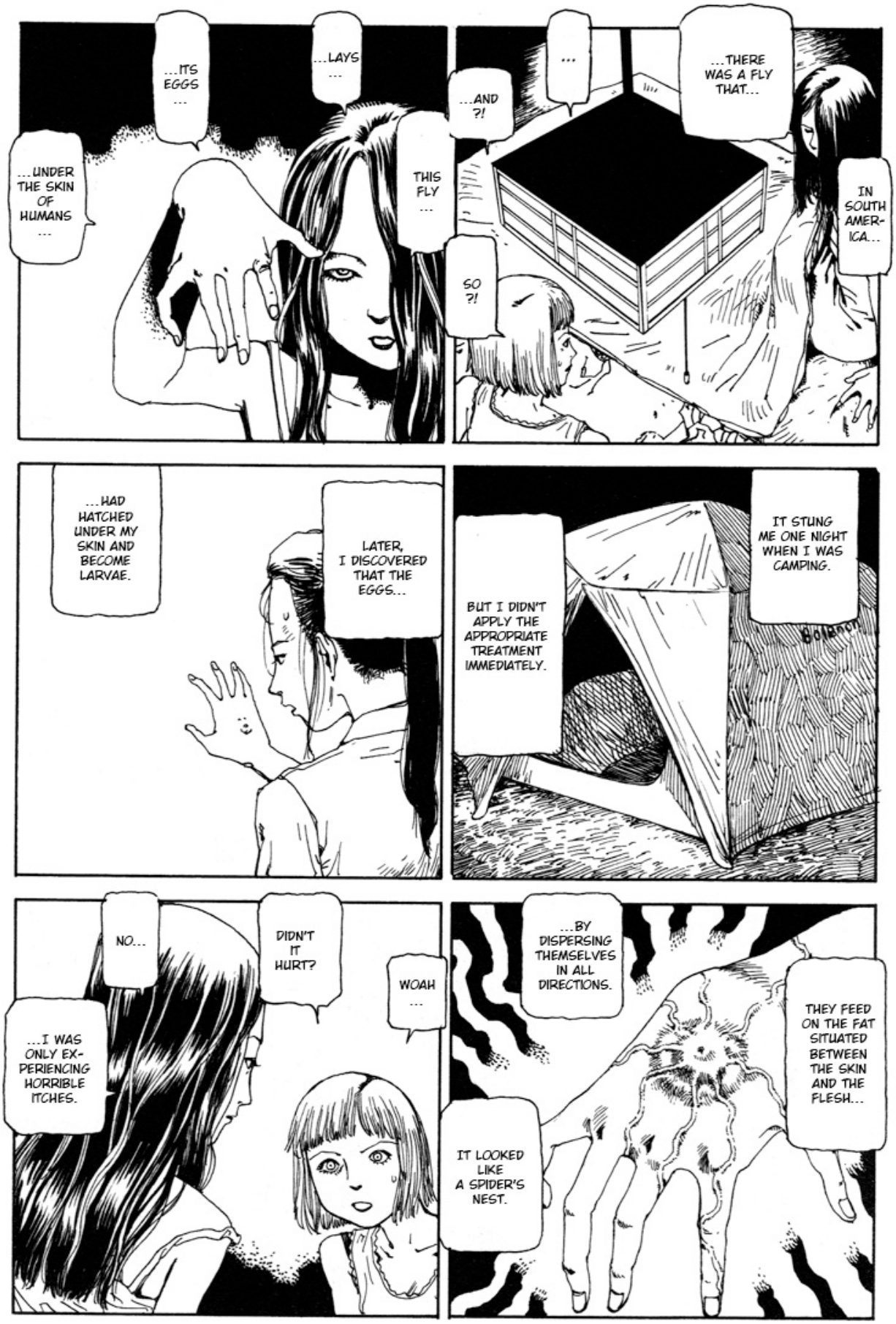


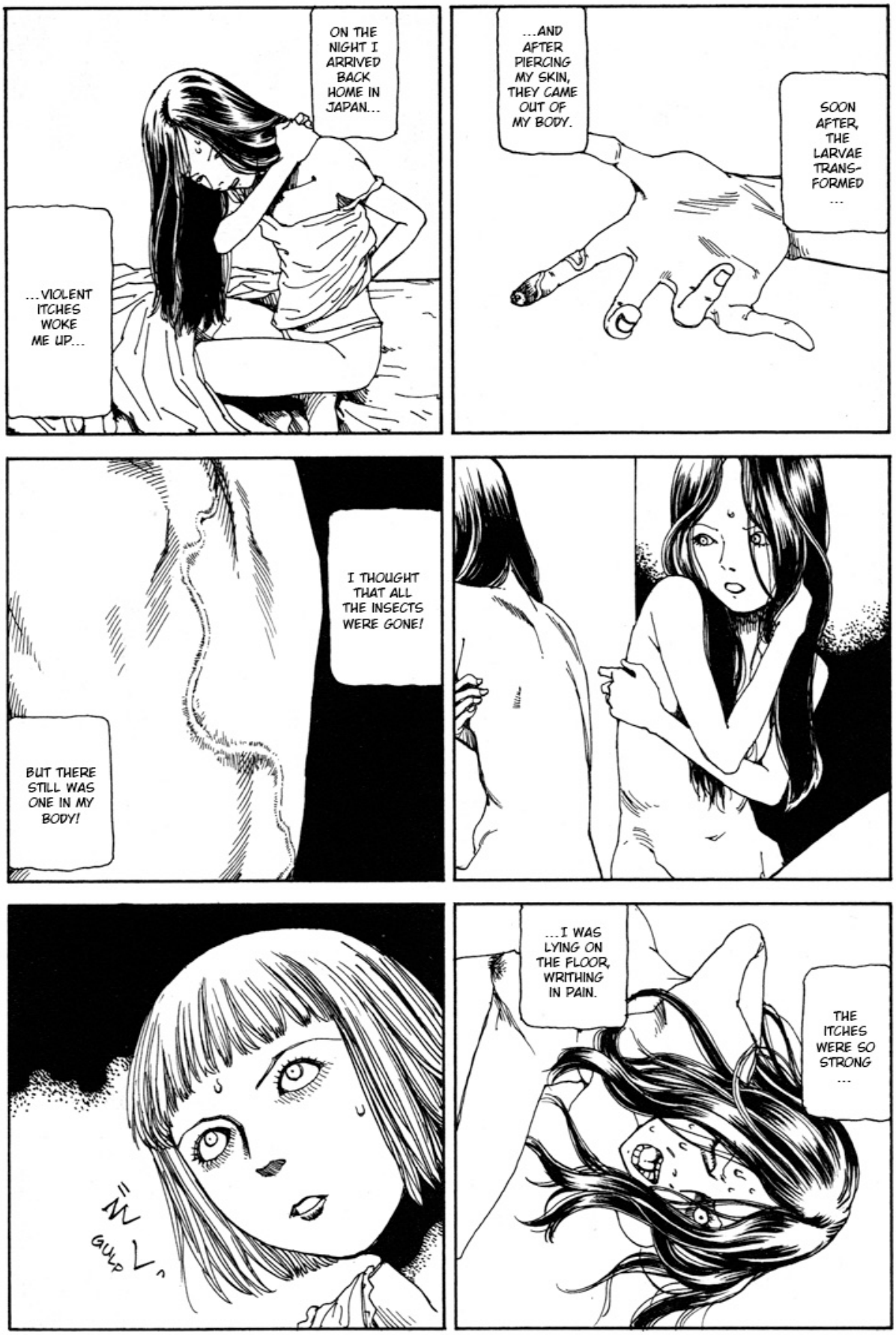
VORACIOUS ITCHES


I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU...
WHY AREN'T YOU ANSWERING THE PHONE?
WITHOUT ANY NEWS FROM HIROKO SINCE HER RETURN FROM SOUTH AMERICA,, I DECIDED TO PAY HER A VISIT.
DO YOU WANT SOME TEA?
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, COME IN.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? ARE YOU SICK?!
?
THERE'S SOME KIND OF SOUND ...
SPLOTCH
ゴボリ
SPLOTCH
ゴボリ
ゴボリ
SPLOTCH


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAND?
OH !
HERE.
AH !
GLUP
S... STOP !!!
DID YOU GO SEE A DOCTOR ?
I WAS RIGHT, YOU REALLY ARE SICK!
ズ Fsss ズ
THIS SOUND AGAIN ...
I SENSED SOMETHING UNDERNEATH HER SKIN...

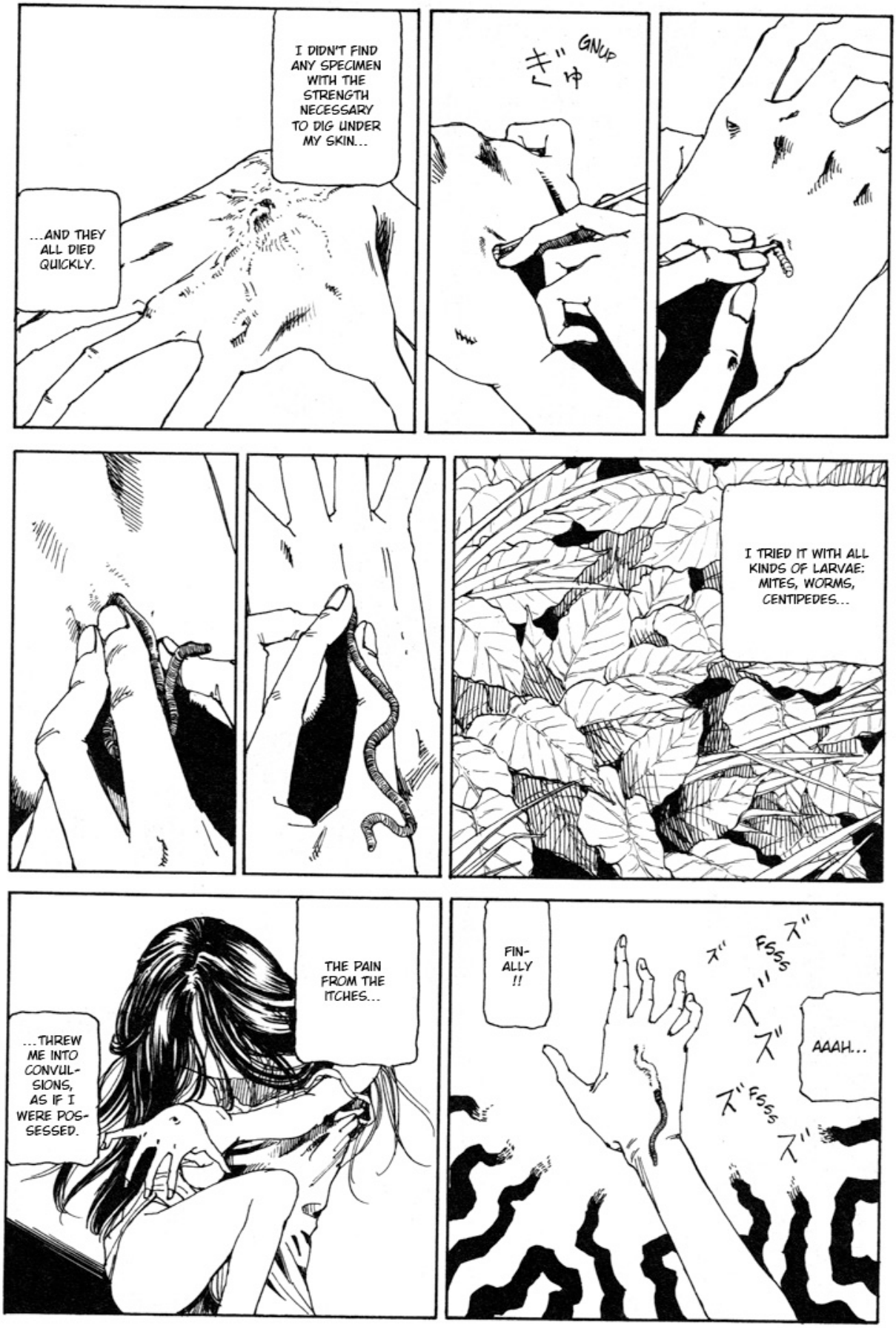
ズ FSSS ズ
ズ FSSS ズ
ズ ズ ズ FSSS ズ
...BUT...?!
STOP!!!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU'RE NOT FEELING WELL AT ALL! COME, I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE HOSPITAL!
IT DOESN'T HURT!
ズ FSSS ズ
ズ FSSS ズ
ズ FSSS ズ
ズ FSSS ズ
ズ FSSS ズ ズ FSSS ズ

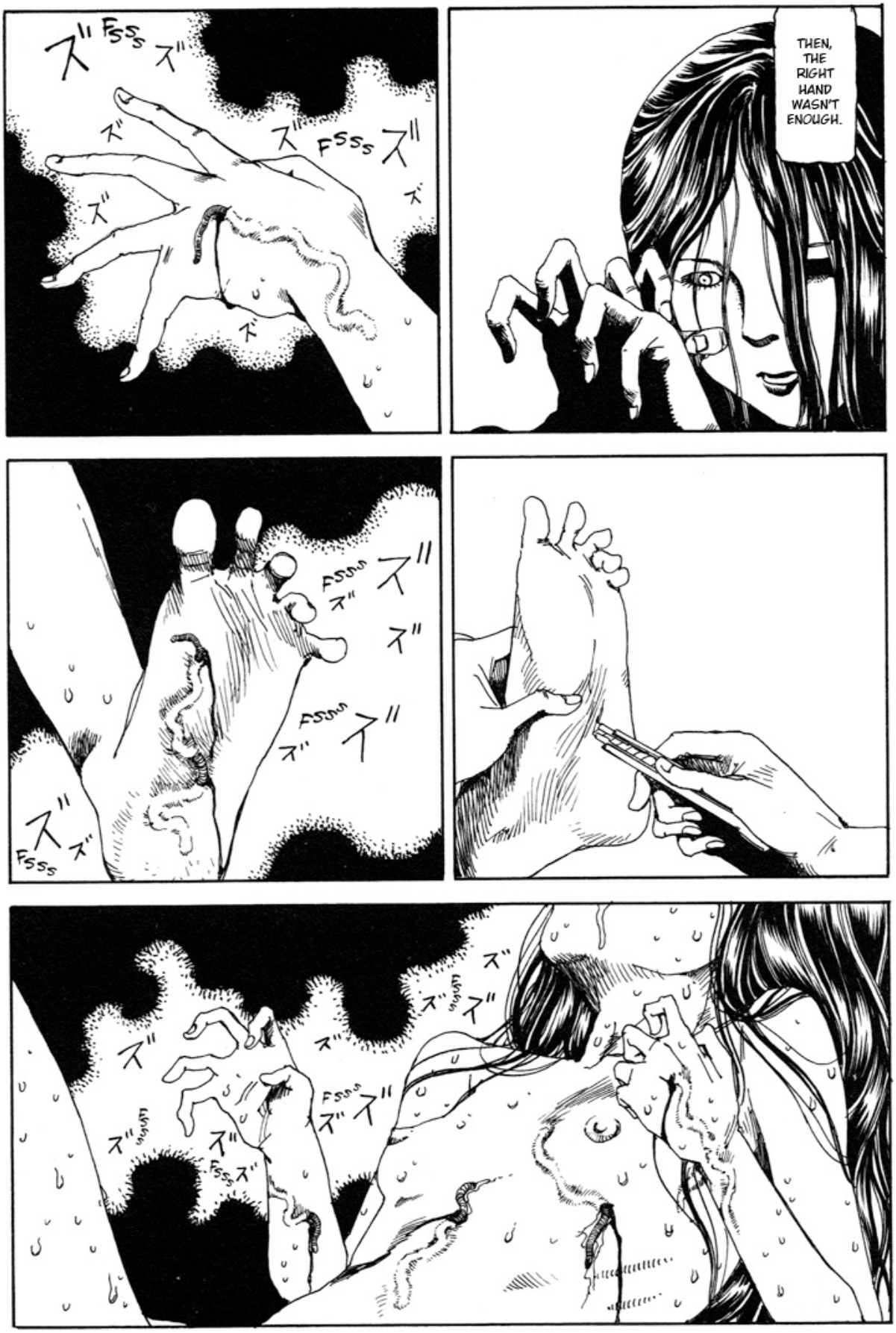

...THERE WAS A FLY THAT...
IN SOUTH AMERICA...
...
...AND ?!
SO ?!
...LAYS ...
...ITS EGGS ...
THIS FLY ...
...UNDER THE SKIN OF HUMANS ...
IT STUNG ME ONE NIGHT WHEN I WAS CAMPING.
BUT I DIDN'T APPLY THE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY.
LATER, I DISCOVERED THAT THE EGGS...
...HAD HATCHED UNDER MY SKIN AND BECOME LARVAE.
...BY DISPERSING THEMSELVES IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
THEY FEED ON THE FAT SITUATED BETWEEN THE SKIN AND THE FLESH...
IT LOOKED LIKE A SPIDER'S NEST.
WOAH ...
DIDN'T IT HURT?
NO...
...I WAS ONLY EXPERIENCING HORRIBLE ITCHES.


ON THE NIGHT I ARRIVED BACK HOME IN JAPAN...
...VIOLENT ITCHES WOKE ME UP...
...AND AFTER PIERCING MY SKIN, THEY CAME OUT OF MY BODY.
SOON AFTER, THE LARVAE TRANS-FORMED ...
I THOUGHT THAT ALL THE INSECTS WERE GONE!
BUT THERE STILL WAS ONE IN MY BODY!
GULP
...I WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR, WRITHING IN PAIN.
THE ITCHES WERE SO STRONG ...

OUT !!!
OUT !!!
LEAVE MY BODY!
OUT !!!
LEAVE MY BODY!
THEN, I FELT EMPTY, IN MY BODY, IN MY MIND AND NOTHING FELT INTERESTING ANYMORE.
THE INSECT CAME OUT AFTER COMPLETING ITS GROWTH.
ON THE NEXT MORNING, THE ITCHES HAD CEASED.
...WERE STILL THERE...
THE TUNNELS DUG BY THE LARVAE ...

...
I DID ALL I COULD TO FIND SIMILAR LARVAE.
I WANT TO FEEL IT AGAIN ...
...THE SENSATION OF INSECTS DIGGING THROUGH MY FLESH.


I DIDN'T FIND ANY SPECIMEN WITH THE STRENGTH NECESSARY TO DIG UNDER MY SKIN...
...AND THEY ALL DIED QUICKLY.
GNUP
I TRIED IT WITH ALL KINDS OF LARVAE: MITES, WORMS, CENTIPEDES...
THE PAIN FROM THE ITCHES...
...THREW ME INTO CONVULSIONS, AS IF I WERE POSSESSED.
FIN-ALLY !!
FSSS
AAAH...


ズ Fsss ズ
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ズ Fsss ズ
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THEN, THE RIGHT HAND WASN'T ENOUGH.
Fsss
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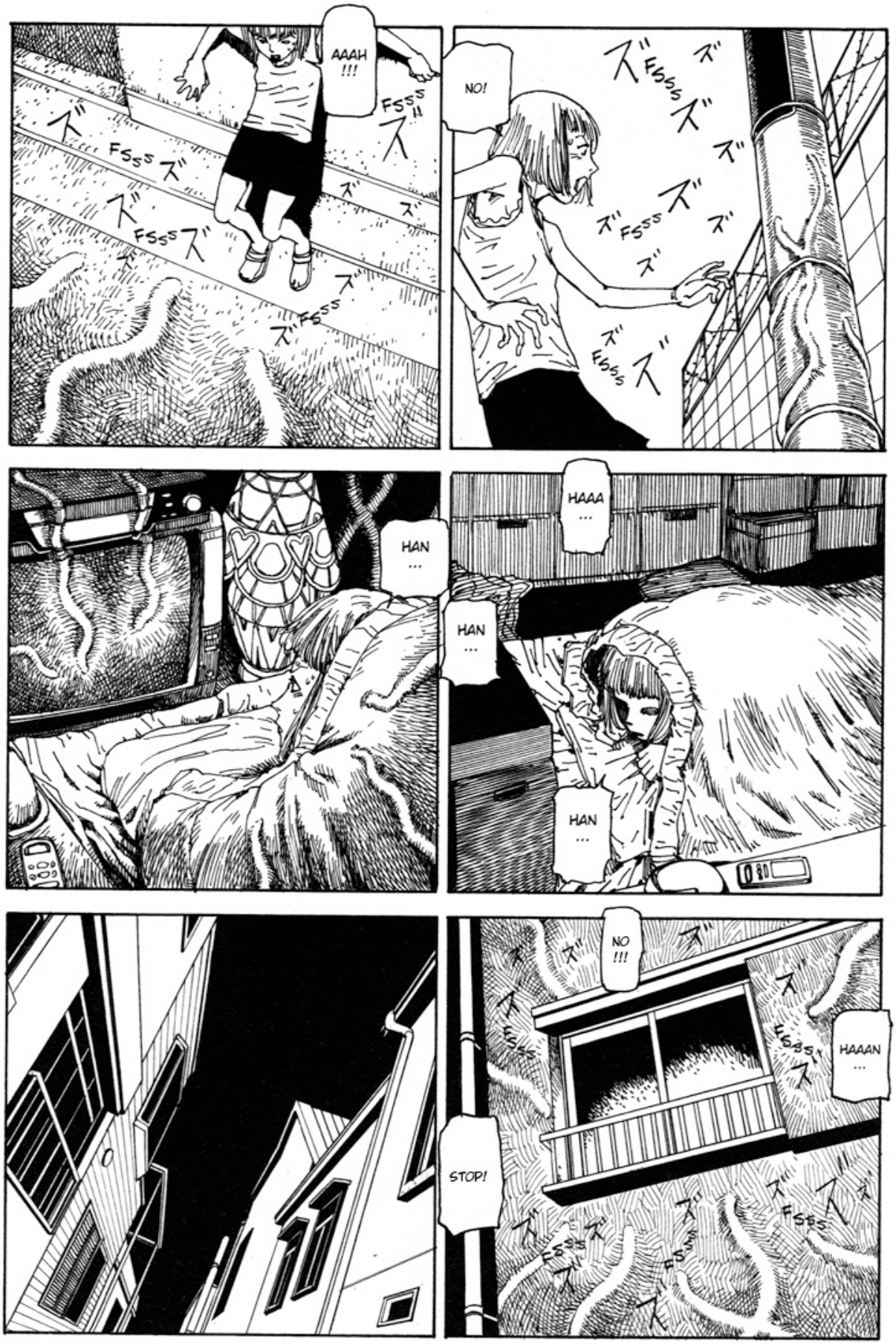
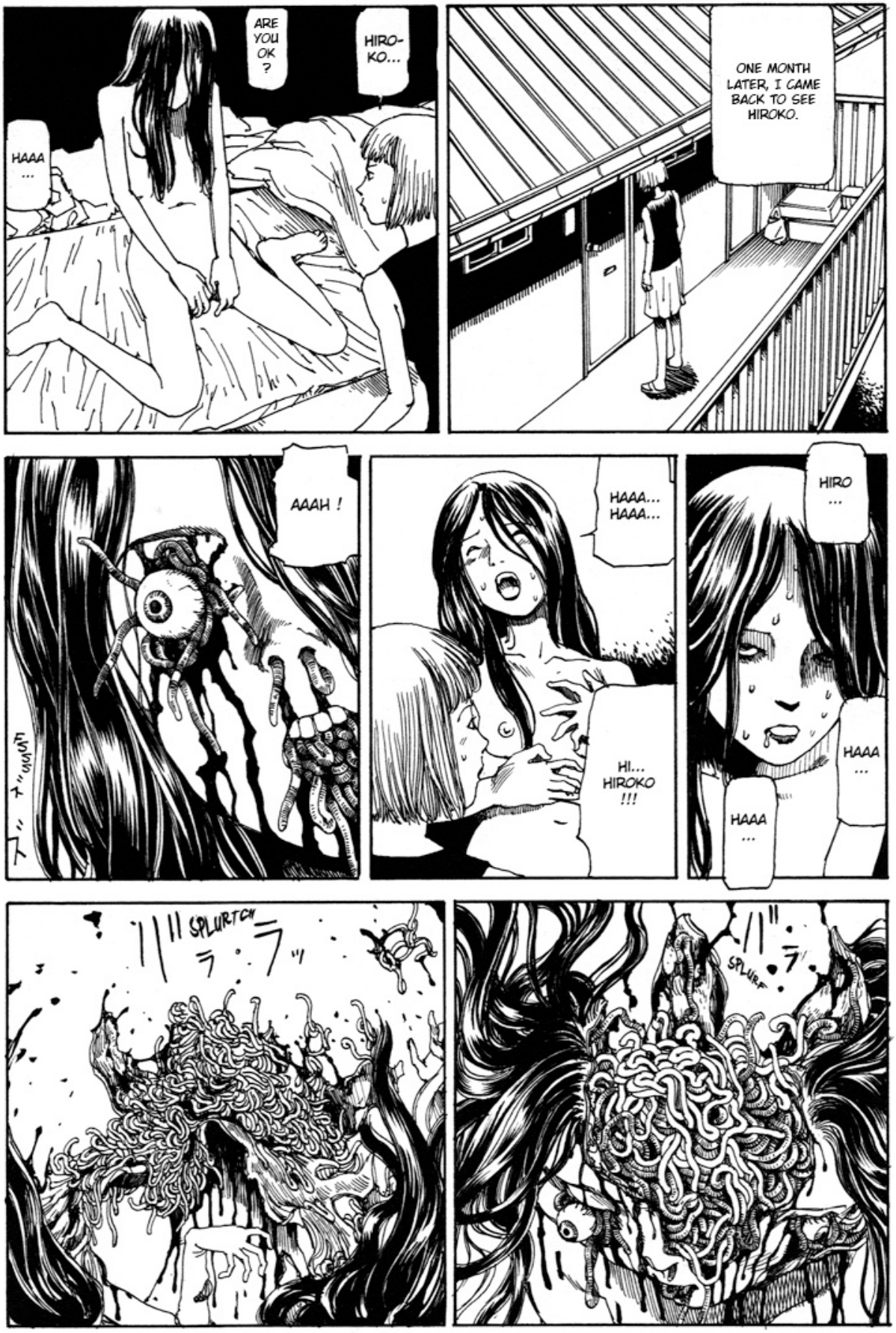
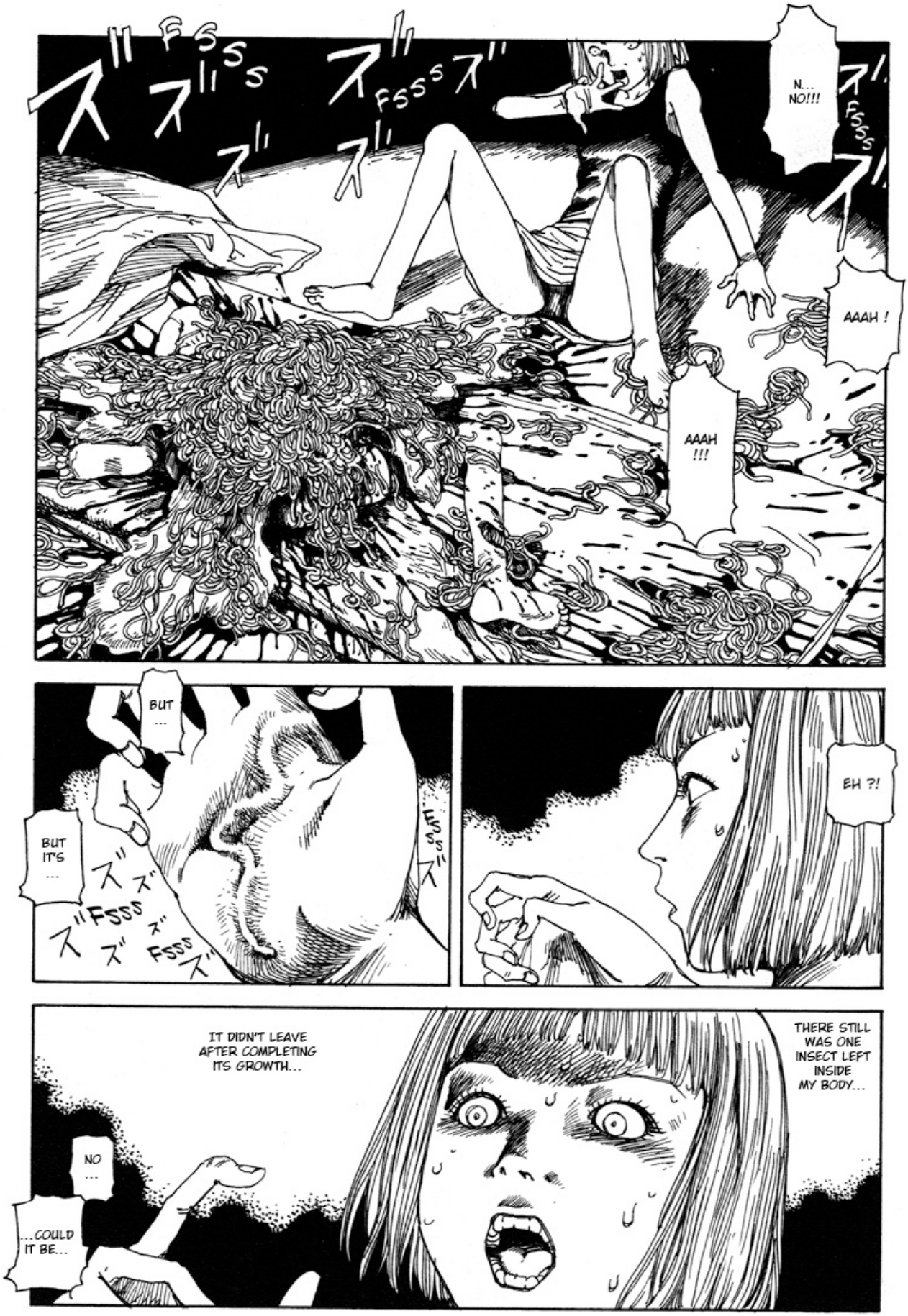
AAAH
...
AAAH
...
HAAA
...
AAAH
...
AAAH
...
AND
TODAY
...
FSSS
FSSS
FSSS
FSSS
FSSS

HERE I AM ...
...
AH ...
HUF ...
NO !!!


AAAH !!!
Fsss
NO!
HAN ...
HAAA ...
HAN ...
HAN ...
NO !!!
HAAAN ...
STOP!


HIRO-KO...
ARE YOU OK ?
HAAA ...
ONE MONTH LATER, I CAME BACK TO SEE HIROKO.
AAAH !
HAAA... HAAA...
HI... HIROKO !!!
HIRO ...
HAAA ...
HAAA ...
SPLURTCH
SPLURT


N... NO!!!
AAAH !
AAAH !!!
BUT ...
BUT IT'S ...
EH ?!
IT DIDN'T LEAVE AFTER COMPLETING ITS GROWTH...
THERE STILL WAS ONE INSECT LEFT INSIDE MY BODY...
NO ...
...COULD IT BE...

YUKIE ...
SHE'S HALLUCINATING. SHE SEEMS TO BE CONVINCED THAT INSECTS ARE EATING HER BODY FROM THE INSIDE.
YUKIE !
AAAH !
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER !!
GET YOURSELF TOGETHER, YUKIE!
THANKFULLY, HER AFFLICTION SEEMS TEMPORARY.
I EXAMINED HER REGARDLESS, BUT I DIDN'T FIND ANY EGGS.
S... SORRY... I WAS JUST JOKING...
KAKKA
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CAUSED HER DELIRIUM WHEN YOU TOLD HER THAT AN INSECT LAID ITS EGGS UNDERNEATH YOUR SKIN WHILE YOU WERE AWAY ON A TRIP.
THE WORMS!
ズ"ららら
ズ ズ
ズ"ズ"
ららら
AAAH... THE WORMS ...

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BACK FROM THE FRONT: FLAMINGO, MIWA SHUPPAN, AUGUST 1998; SUBSEQUENTLY COLLECTED IN SPARKLE! GREATER EAST-ASIAN CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE, 1999
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TREMORS: COTTON COMIC, TOKYO SANSEISHA
COLLAPSE: COTTON COMIC, TOKYO SANSEISHA